FITZGEORGE:

A NOVEL.

Smiles without mirth, and pastimes without pleasure,
Youth without honour, age without respect.'

BYRON'S *Marino Faliero*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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FITZGEORGE.

CHAPTER I.

INVESTIGATION.

When the friends of the Fitzgeorge family came to the house of Mr. Simkin, to make inquiry into the sad rumours that were in circulation concerning the conduct of Lady Louisa, an inconvenient arrangement was made for the examination of the worthy couple which they had not anticipated. They were requested to favour the gentlemen with their company one at a time.

Now when the first messenger was sent to

pump the Simkins, and to ascertain how much they were likely to assert and to swear to, they were sitting together, side by side, very conveniently for the purpose of conveying signals; but to be examined separately was awkward, especially to Mrs. Simkin, who was afraid that she should blush, being in the presence of so many gentlemen, and not having her husband at hand to keep her in countenance. Mr. Simkin also felt awkward, as his memory was not very good, and as his information came mostly from his wife. He therefore endeavoured to throw on his wife the burden of the first examination, and in this he succeeded.

"Now," said the spokesman of the party to Mrs. Simkin, "this is a matter of the utmost consequence to the well-being and comfort of a most respectable family; we hope and trust therefore, that you will have the kindness to furnish us with such information that we may know what steps we ought to recommend for

the honour of the family, which we have very much at heart."

"For the matter of that," replied Mrs. Simkin, "I am sure I should have been the last person in the world to speak of any thing that I have seen and heard; but really there are some things that one cannot shut one's eyes to, if ever so willing."

"Exactly so. Now, Mrs. Simkin, we are not going to put you on your oath;" she was glad to hear that; "but it will be necessary to make written minutes of the matters which you may have to inform us of." She was sorry to hear that.

The materials for writing were arranged, and the interrogation proceeded. "Will you have the goodness, now, to inform these gentlemen, what was the first symptom or indication of improper demeanour in the behaviour of Lady Louisa?"

"Why, sir," replied Mrs. Simkin, "I think

that I may safely say, that the first symptom of improper demeanour which I observed in Lady Louisa, was one day when I dined there with Mr. Simkin, when there were several gentlemen present, and I was the only lady."

"Was the behaviour of her ladyship, on that occasion, such as you feel yourself quite at liberty to mention?" asked the examiner, with due deference to Mrs. Simkin's delicacy.

"Most undoubtedly," replied Mrs. Simkin with great firmness of manner, "I was never eye-witness to any thing that I should be ashamed to mention. Her behaviour on this occasion was altogether unbecoming a lady."

"You will have the kindness, madam, to be explicit."

"I will, sir. As soon as we came home, and, indeed, as we got into the carriage, Mr. S. observed to me, that Lady Louisa was mighty fond of the gentlemen's company."

"That was Mr. Simkin's opinion; but what did you yourself observe?"

"I observed the same thing; and that, instead of talking with me, who was the only lady present, she gave all her attention to the gentlemen."

"Did you observe any particular attention paid by her ladyship to Mr. Simkin?"

Mrs. Simkin, with an eye of lightning and a tongue of thunder, replied, "No, indeed, sir!"

"I beg pardon: but to whom was the principal attention of her ladyship directed?"

"Why, then, sir, if I must say, it was to Captain Jackson and Mr. Thomson."

"To Captain Jackson and Mr. Thomson. Have you any distinct recollection whether the attention of her ladyship was directed more to one than to the other of these gentlemen?"

This was a question for an answer to which Mrs. Simkin was not expressly and particularly prepared; but she had presence of mind enough to know that it would be exceedingly inde-

corous, as well as impolitic, to seem to be inventing an answer; on the spur of the moment, therefore, she replied, "Her ladyship's attention was evidently most directed to Captain Jackson."

"Most directed to Captain Jackson. Did the Captain pay her ladyship more frequent visits than Mr. Thomson?"

"Oh, yes! many more—many more; Captain Jackson was almost always at the house!"

"Did he ever remain in the house all night?"

"Very frequently indeed."

"And did he come and go with any particular attempt at concealment?"

"Oh, yes; nobody never knew when he came and when he went. I have often watched him."

"You were, of course, suspicious of an improper intimacy between Captain Jackson and her ladyship. Will you have the kindness to state to these gentlemen the circumstances

which excited the suspicions, independently of the fact of her ladyship paying such exclusive attention to these two gentlemen at her table?"

"Their frequent visits!" replied Mrs. Simkin.

"Certainly; but it appears from your statement that you were rather on the look-out for these visits, than led to observe them by any accident; for you say that you have often watched Captain Jackson coming and going, as though he wished not to be seen. Now, a lady in your rank, and of your understanding, would, of course, not be watching the doors of a neighbour out of a mere feeling of curiosity."

"To be sure I should not," replied Mrs. Simkin, rather offended that any necessity should be supposed to exist for making such a remark.

"Then you will have the goodness to inform us, what were the causes or circumstances which led you to watch the movements of Captain Jackson?"

"Because Lady Louisa," replied Mrs. Simkin, "was always talking about him in such very high terms; and once, in particular, she said, that she never had any thing to thank her husband for, but for introducing to her acquaintance such a delightful man as Captain Jackson."

"Her ladyship said this in your hearing?"

"She did so."

"Were other persons present at the time?"

"My husband was present."

"From the manner, then, in which her ladyship spoke of Captain Jackson, you imagined that she had an improper partiality for him?"

"I did so."

"And therefore you watched, in order to see how often he visited her ladyship?"

"Exactly so."

"Her ladyship also spoke of Mr. Thomson?"

"Yes, very highly indeed; but not quite so highly of him as of Mr. Jackson."

"Not so highly as to lead you to suspect any improper partiality for him?"

"Oh, yes!" replied Mrs. Simkin, who just recollected herself, that the arrangement with her husband was to accuse Jackson and Thomson both, though Jackson and Thomson only; "she had an undoubted partiality for Mr. Thomson, as well as for Captain Jackson: only I think that Captain Jackson was the greatest favourite of the two."

The examiner smiled, but Mrs. Simkin, fortunately, did not see him. "Now, Mrs. Simkin," continued he with a reinforcement of gravity and solemnity, "this is an inquiry of a peculiarly delicate nature, and we should be exceedingly sorry to say any thing, or to urge you to say any thing, which should do violence to your feelings; but, for the honour of the family, as this investigation has been once commenced, it is necessary that it should be pursued to the utmost, in order that the question may for ever be set at rest. Will you, therefore, be so kind

as to state, in a few words, what reason you have for supposing that any improper intercourse has taken place between the parties?"

Mrs. Simkin blushed, and said, in spite of her blushes, "I recollect very distinctly hearing her ladyship say, that it was very melancholy to sleep alone."

Having made this sacrifice, as she thought it, of delicacy to the cause of justice, Mrs. Simkin held down her head in sweet confusion, and saw not the imperfectly subdued smile with which the examiner put his next question.

"And because her ladyship observed to you that it was very melancholy to sleep alone, you infer that she was in the habit of having a bed-fellow?"

"I do so, indeed, sir," replied Mrs. Simkin, not aware of the *non sequitur*, and quite as unaware of the smile of incredulity that gleamed upon the countenance of the person who put the question.

"You must be aware, Mrs. Simkin," said

the examiner, "that an inference is not a proof; it is therefore desirable that some more express testimony be given to the fact, if it be a fact."

"If it be a fact!" interrupted Mrs. Simkin, quite angry at the affront implied in such conditional language; "why there can be no doubt of it;—the child is as like as possible."

"Child!" exclaimed the whole party at once, with as much wonderment as the wise men of Gotham expressed when they lighted on a mare's nest.

"Yes, gentlemen," replied Mrs. Simkin, roused to an unblushing energy and self-possession, "I say *child*, Lady Louisa has had a child since she came to reside in this neighbourhood; and the child is as like Captain Jackson as possibly can be."

One of the party, in a tone of voice which was by no means agreeable to Mrs. Simkin, because it sounded like banter, said, "Is the child at all like Mr. Thomson, too?"

"No, sir," replied Mrs. Simkin, with parti-

cular force of intonation, and rapidity of utterance; "no more like Mr. Thomson than you are."

"Well, madam," said the first speaker, "let us be quite serious if you please. Perhaps you can favour us with some particulars of the lady's confinement; of the time; and where the child now is. It is living, I presume, from your manner of speaking of it."

"Living, ay—and a fine child it is! But as to the circumstances and time of the lady's confinement, of course you cannot expect me to tell you very particularly; because a lady confined under such circumstances would not let the matter be known very publicly. But as far as I can form a judgment, I take it to be about four months ago."

"About four months ago, very good;—and from what do you draw that inference?"

"From the age of the child."

"And from what do you infer the age of the child?"

"Bless me, sir," exclaimed Mrs. Simkin, rather nettled at the closeness of the interrogations, "you are cross-questioning a body like a brow-beating counsellor at the Old Bailey!"

"This minuteness of interrogation," said the gentleman in a most conciliatory tone, "is absolutely necessary for the purpose of an accurate statement; not that we would insinuate any doubt of your veracity."

"Well, sir," retorted Mrs. Simkin, rather encouraged to greater boldness, than melted down to meekness by the conciliatory tone of the examiner, "if you don't doubt my *voracity*, why don't you take my word at once?"

"We will take your word, madam, as far as you will be pleased to give it to us. You can inform us then, where the child is?"

"The child," replied Mrs. Simkin, "is at this present time with a young couple who live in a cottage on the other side of the common, and it passes for theirs, but it is no more theirs

than it is mine.—Lady Louisa is always going to see it."

Mrs. Simkin began now to show symptoms of weariness; for, as she afterwards said, she thought that the people seemed determined to bother her, and she did not like to be bothered. Seeing that Mrs. Simkin looked tired and felt somewhat irritated, the gentlemen suggested that it might be as well now to discontinue the examination of the lady, and to request the favour of Mr. Simkin's presence. The lady was ready enough to adopt the suggestion, and she went with no small haste to the apartment in which he was waiting to be called.

It was not altogether correct that after one witness had been examined she should be closeted with another about to be examined. Mrs. Simkin was aware of the irregularity, but was afraid that her husband, who was not the brightest genius in the world, might make some blunder unless his memory was refreshed by a hint or two, especially concerning the matter of

filiation, which Mrs. Simkin, herself, had never stated before so very explicitly, as she had this moment to the gentlemen in the other room. She knowing that it was not very regular that she should be talking to him previously to his examination, and subsequently to her own, feared that their colloquy might presently be interrupted, and accordingly endeavoured to make the most of her time.

There is a well-known proverb which says, "the more haste the worse speed," and so it fared on the present occasion with Mrs. Simkin, who wished to inform her husband that she had given her testimony that Jackson, was the more favoured lover, and the unquestionable father of the child. But, unfortunately the names of Jackson and Thomson had been so jumbled together in her bothered pericranium, that instead of saying "Jackson's the man," she said "Thomson's the man;" and, forthwith, sent her husband into the room where the committee of investigation were sitting. Mr. Simkin, him-

self, as he went from one room to the other, muttered, "Thomson's the man, Thomson's the man." And the impression was made on his pericranium accordingly.

Mr. Simkin bowed very politely to the gentlemen of the committee, and the gentlemen of committee bowed very politely to Mr. Simkin.

"This is a very unpleasant affair, Mr. Simkin."

"Very unpleasant, indeed!" replied Mr. Simkin. "I little thought, when I retired from business and took this nice place, that I should ever be the means of introducing Mrs. S. into the society of people no better than they should be. But if that Lady Louisa is not a bad one, I am monstrously out in my reckoning."

Mr. Simkin, by his readiness of utterance and frankness of expression seemed to bid fair to be very communicative;—it was, however, necessary that there should be some regularity in the statements, in order that the depositions

should be lucidly arranged. The gentleman, therefore, who held the pen, said in a business-like manner, "Now, Mr. Simkin, we shall feel much obliged if you will have the kindness to answer a few questions, just by way of corroborating the intelligence which we have had from Mrs. Simkin."

Mr. Simkin bowed and replied, "Any information that I can give you, gentlemen, is perfectly at your service; but it was my mistress that was most active in watching the lady, and I used often to have a joke with her about female curiosity, and used to say—"

"Exactly so," interrupted the examiner. "Then you can tell us, perhaps, in a general way, whether you have yourself observed any thing in the deportment of Lady Louisa, greatly inconsistent with propriety?"

"Have n't I indeed!" replied Mr. Simkin, "Why, I never observed any thing in her conduct consistent with propriety."

"Be so good as to name some instances of improper conduct, which have come immediately under your own eye."

"Under my own eye?" replied Mr. Simkin, chuckling. "Why, she took special care, I guess, not to let me see any of her goings on with her fellows."

"What are we to understand by her ladyship's fellows, Mr. Simkin?"

"Her fellows, bless you! I mean them chaps, that used to be always visiting her incog, till we found them out. There was one Mr. Thomson, especially."

"Was there any one else?"

"There was also one Captain Jackson, but Thomson was the favourite. He was the man."

The examiner knitted his brows and looked on his papers, then drawing his hand across his face said, "Thomson, you say? Now Mr. Simkin, excuse me, but in a matter of this nature it is a concern of the greatest moment,

that we should be perfectly correct and accurate in all our statements. Don't hurry yourself, but endeavour, as well as you can, to recollect all the particulars. We are not examining you with a view of obtaining contradictory evidence to serve a purpose, but we wish to have the truth."

"Truth!" said Mr. Simkin, with the natural anger of a suspected liar; "I tell you the truth. I say Thomson was the man, and my mistress will tell you the same."

"You are quite sure now, Mr. Simkin?"

"Sure as you are sitting there."

Mr. Simkin suspected, that notwithstanding their protestations, they were endeavouring to betray him into a contradiction, especially since his wife had whispered to him with so much haste and emphasis, "Thomson's the man." Therefore he stuck most positively to the assertion, that Thomson was the chief favourite. This was unfortunate for the object of

the inquiry. All the investigation, therefore, ended in smoke; and when the gentlemen came to look over their papers and to sum up the evidence, it amounted to just nothing at all.

"But," said one of the party, "though there is nothing to prove her guilt, there is nothing to prove her innocence."—Admirable logician!

CHAPTER II.

PUZZLED WHAT TO DO.

When the investigation had been concluded or rather brought to a stand-still, by the conflicting testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Simkin, the next step was to consider what was to be done. It is very awkward that there is no such thing as keeping a secret. Fitzgeorge would have given any thing, if he had had any thing to give, that this investigation should not be made public, but it was absolutely impossible to prevent it, for it had been talked about so much, that all the world knew that it was going on, and all the world was on the tiptoe of expectation for the important result. All the world is a queer creature; it seems to

have nothing to do, but to interest itself about that which does not concern it. Two hundred years ago, the people who lived in this island burnt witches;—what will the people of this island laugh at two hundred years hence?

One section of the committee carried the report of the investigation to the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge, and the other carried it to Lord Fitzgeorge. When Augustus Fitzgeorge had read it over he was most graciously pleased to be exceedingly indignant, and had not some of the party been his particular friends, he would have thrown the papers at their heads.

"This is an absolute nuisance," said he, "the world is looking for a corroboration of certain reports that are in circulation, and this all but contradicts them."

"Not quite contradicts, however," replied one of the party. "Mr. Simkin contends for Thomson, and Mrs. Simkin will have it that Jackson was the favourite. Is it not possible that they were both favourites? Is it not possible

that Mrs. Simkin herself had a *penchant* for Thomson and wished to exonerate him; and that Mr. Simkin had a feeling of jealousy against Thomson, and wished to inculpate him?"

"No bad thought of yours," replied Fitzgeorge; "but it is a pity, that being man and wife, and in one story, they could not have managed to make their testimony hang better together so as to bear the public eye."

"I think so too," said the other; "but in our examination it was necessary, for decency's sake, to have the witnesses in one at a time."

"A foolish plan at best," said Borrowman, who happened to be present, "for by that arrangement you get two lies instead of one."

"But, perhaps, we have two truths in the present case," said Fitzgeorge.

"As lovers of truth let us hope that we have," replied Borrowman; "but it would be more convenient if they would have the goodness to look a little more like one another."

"The question is now," said Fitzgeorge, "what we must say to the world. Shall we confess that we have been defeated?"

"No, no," replied Borrowman; "that will be a work of supererogation, the world will find out that soon enough. How does a general act when he has lost a battle? Does he send word home that the enemy has given him a drubbing"

"Certainly not. He mystifies the matter, so that nobody can understand what he means but those who know all about it beforehand."

"Then do the same. If the Simkins have conspired to give a false testimony, will they proclaim themselves to the world? By this time they are aware of the blunder which they have committed. They will be cautious how they talk apart on the subject again. The world can know nothing but from this report, and surely we may suppress the report."

"But we must give the world some account of the inquiry, or at least of the result of it,

though not of the particulars. We have been blustering about prosecution and divorce," said Fitzgeorge; "how can we now account satisfactorily for the withholding prosecution, and not suing for divorce?"

"Plenty of contrivances may be had recourse to yet," said one of the party; "we may give out that you were so mercifully considerate of your father's niece, that you would not drive matters to an extremity. You may report that some of the principal evidence has been bought off;—you may say that you yielded to the solicitations of your father, who of course would be sorry to have you succeed in getting rid of that encumbrance with which he has taken so much pains to burden you."

"Exactly so," replied Fitzgeorge; "but we must see that the world does not take it into its head, that any unfair means have been used for procuring evidence. And we must always take care that my father does not publish to the world that he sees no cause of blame."

"Ay, ay," said one of the party, "none but yourself can manage that."

"I!" exclaimed Fitzgeorge, "I should imagine that I am the last person in the world to persuade my father to assist me. He would be glad to rivet the chains yet stronger."

"Is not your father fond of letter-writing?"

"Rather so."

"Is he not also fond of giving advice seasoned with a little of the pomp of authority?"

"Not a little so," replied Fitzgeorge.

"Can you not then manage to suggest a letter of advice? You understand."

While the above scene was going on in the mansion of Augustus Fitzgeorge, other individuals of the committee of inquiry, who were pleased to call themselves friends of Lord Fitzgeorge, had taken to his lordship a copy of the report of the investigation, and had reverentially placed it before his lordship, who was most graciously pleased to peruse it with great attention; and when he had graciously finished the perusal,

he lifted up his eyes quickly, and said to the gentlemen who brought it, "Well, what does all this amount to? This proves nothing. I thought so—thought so. I wonder what Augustus could mean by desiring any investigation. Simkin—Simkin—Simkin. Who's Simkin? Where does he come from? What does he live upon? Is he an old man, or a young man?"

"Simkin, my lord, is rather past the middle of life, and has retired from business."

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted Lord Fitzgeorge; "a retired shopkeeper—vulgar people."

"We must acknowledge to your lordship that we observed strong symptoms of vulgarity both in Mr. and Mrs. Simkin, and thought such people by no means proper companions for so high-born a lady as your lordship's niece."

"To be sure not," replied Lord Fitzgeorge; "I will write her a letter and tell her so. Her associating with these vulgar people is the only impropriety of which she has been guilty."

"So we inferred, my lord; and it appears that owing to some mortification that they have experienced from her ladyship, they have conspired to raise these calumnies against her."

"Well, well," said his lordship, "I will write her a letter, and tell her that I do not approve of her associating with these people."

"And perhaps if your lordship would have the kindness to suggest, in the most gentle terms of course, that it would be desirable that Lady Louisa should repress the exuberant vivacity of her spirits; it would be serviceable, as the means of preventing any future misunderstanding."

"Leave that to me, leave that to me," said his lordship, hastily. "I know what I am about."

The gentlemen who brought the report of the investigation, had scarcely left his lordship's presence, when the Hon. Augustus Fitzgeorge was announced, earnestly entreating the honour of an audience.

"So here comes my unmanageable scape-

grace. What will he say for himself now? He will never have the impudence to say that such evidence as this is sufficient to criminate the poor woman. Let him come—I will see him."

If Fitzgeorge had been rehearsing paces and faces for a week, he could not have approached his father with a more elegant gait, or a better-managed expression of cheerful respect. He bowed, he smiled, he held forth his hand with a well-wrought cordiality and confidence, and before his father could speak, he said, "Sir' give me joy of this happy result of our most delicate investigation."

"Joy, joy! What do you mean,—eh?—What do you mean? Did you not wish to find her guilty, and have a divorce? Would not you have sold her to Mr. Thomson, or Captain Jackson for five thousand pounds? And would not you have jumped at the bargain?"

"Sir," said Augustus, laying his hand very ceremoniously on his heart, "you little know my heart if you imagine that I could derive any

satisfaction from disgrace falling on any of our family."

"Then if you are glad that your wife is innocent, why do you not take her home, and live reputably with her as you ought to do?"

"Sir," replied Augustus, "you are not aware, I presume, how widely different is respect from love;—I wish the Lady Louisa all happiness and all good repute, but it is not in my power to love her. On that point we understand each other perfectly well. It might have been for our happiness that we had not come together; but as it is we must make the best of it. It concerned me deeply to hear those unpleasant reports, and I was anxious that an investigation should take place; and no one can be more sincerely rejoiced than I am at the happy termination of it."

"But, by leaving your house, you see she has got into bad company."

"That, sir, is an evil against which, by your kind admonition she may hereafter be more upon her guard."

"My admonitions," said his lordship, "has been very often thrown away."

"It is to be hoped that, in this case, it may not be so," replied Augustus.

"We shall see."

So a letter was written accordingly to Lady Louisa, and in that letter no allusion was made to any more serious charge, but a gentle admonition was given, that she would be more choice for the future in the selection of her associates, and a little more guarded in the language which she might use in the hearing of strangers. The letter was kindly but clumsily expressed, and Louisa, in the exuberance of her vivacity, rather laughed at it. She returned an answer, however, thanking Lord Fitzgeorge for his kind consideration, and assuring him that he needed not to be under any apprehension on her account; that she had not any cause to regard any part of her conduct with regret, except, perhaps, it might be her intimacy with such people as the Simkins, who, after all, might be under some external influ-

ence, which might have prompted their conduct in the present instance.

Now, after all this was done, and after the formal investigation, and the formal letter of Lord Fitzgeorge, and the formal answer of Lady Louisa, how much was Augustus Fitzgeorge nearer to the attainment of his object than before? Every thing that had taken place had come to the knowledge of the world, and various opinions were accordingly expressed, and in many instances the opinions entertained and expressed were by no means flattering to Fitzgeorge, or agreeable to his notions of his own dignity and honour. He could very easily say, that he had not used any direct or indirect means to procure the accusation, and the world readily enough give him credit for the assertion; but the world would not believe that he was not mightily glad to hear the accusations, and that he was not very ready to take advantage of them; nor would the world believe that there were not many who were ready to

invent or exaggerate, and distort any thing that might be the means of procuring that divorce, which every body must know to be the real and hearty wish of Fitzgeorge.

Partly, Fitzgeorge himself was aware of this, and he was also aware, that an individual, situated as was Lady Louisa, must have every possible motive to guard against any thing that might be construed to her disadvantage or disrepute; therefore, all his hope must rest in an ingenious and well-conducted plot, which could not be arranged and matured in a short space of time. He knew that it was necessary to create unfavourable impressions, and to strengthen them in every possible way. For this purpose he contrived that the public should understand, that there was sufficient moral, though not sufficient legal evidence. But all this required trouble, and vigilance, and activity, which things were altogether contrary to his notions of comfort.

"And now," said Fitzgeorge, muttering to

himself, "all this apparatus and fuss amounts to next to nothing at all. The attempt to untie the knot has drawn it tighter. I must, for the future, be a little more on my guard, and on the next occasion of an accusation I must see that the plot is more skilfully laid. In fact, I must engage in it myself. We must have the witnesses better prepared; they must rehearse their parts beforehand. If I make another attempt and fail in that, I am a lost man.—A lost man!" He repeated the words aloud, and with painful emphasis, "What a thought to enter *my* mind! What an expression to pass *my* lips! When I commenced the career of life, and laid the foundation of my hopes in an ample fortune, a graceful person, a high reputation, and exalted station, I thought not of the humiliating importunities of creditors whom I could not silence or satisfy; I thought not of the mortifying increase of my bulk, of the disrespectful manner in which my name should be treated by a plebeian rabble. When I saw my

fine form reflected in many a mirror, I little thought that a time was coming when I should be united in the indissoluble bonds of marriage with one whom I can only regard as an insufferable bore. But life is not over yet, and while there is life there is hope. I have been hitherto disappointed in spite of my utmost care, it does not follow that I am destined still to meet with nought but disappointment in the course of what remains of life. I have some prospect before me. A time must come, in the course of nature, in which I shall bear a higher name and enjoy an ampler fortune than I now possess; I may have then the happiness and content which I now seek in vain. Then also I may have more power and means to get rid of this insufferable burden of a wife. Of all the institutions that annoy the human race, is there one more utterly disagreeable than the indissolubility of marriage? It is an instrument of torture, and a refinement in the art of ingeniously tormenting. Once I looked on civilized

life as the only tolerable condition of existence, but now I am inclined to think that they are the most fortunate who are the least shackled by the fetters of formality and the chains of opinion."

Fitzgeorge was now in that state of mind which is characteristic of what is with great propriety called a disappointed man. It was with great reluctance that he could bring himself to acknowledge that he was disappointed. Year after year, and month after month, the demolition of one fancy had been the foundation of another. Yielding to every impulse, and following every caprice, still he was not what he wished to be. He never could make present realities answer to past hopes. He found in nothing the sweetness that he had anticipated. A change was now to himself imperceptibly creeping over him, and he was beginning to experience and to exhibit that ill-humour which is the constant concomitant of disappointed sensuality and mortified pride. In the earlier

days of his life he had not been constitutionally morose, and he had no other ill-humour than what is inseparable from an overweening pride, But as his disappointments increased and multiplied his temper was soured, and from being out of humour with himself he became out of humour with the rest of the world. Towards his friends he carried himself with a humiliating distance, making them more sensibly feel that they were rather tolerated companions than esteemed friends. There is, of course, a pleasure in ill-humour, or no one would ever indulge in it; this was now Fitzgeorge's greatest pleasure, and as it could not always be conveniently vented against those with whom he associated, it accumulated its force against the absent and hated wife, reserving its full development for a time when he might have more power and opportunity to render it effective.

CHAPTER III.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

FINDING that, for the present at least, it was impossible to get rid of his wife, Fitzgeorge thought that it was his best policy to enjoy himself as well as he possibly could under existing circumstances. It is the province of inexperienced youth to look forward to unmingled enjoyment, and unabated, unalloyed pleasure; but riper years bring another lesson, and convince us that, with all our dexterity and care, we cannot have every thing our own way; and then we learn that if we cannot have all that we wish, it is our wisdom to enjoy what we can.

Soon after the public wife was dismissed, the private wife resumed her place, dismissing all jealousy of Mrs. Jernigan. "Ah!" said Fitzgeorge to himself, "this is indeed a wife with whom I may live in peace and with some degree of comfort, especially now that in consequence of my public marriage, this my private marriage seems less binding. I suppose the commonplace part of the world, whose vulgar notions are not worth regard, will imagine that I have dismissed my public for the sake of my private wife. Be it so; let the vulgar think what they may and what they will, I defy them with all my heart and despise them with all my soul. In the most ancient nations there is an imperishable distinction of caste; so that beings said by Europeans to be of the same common nature, are kept from all intercourse or sympathy, and are as much apart as animals of a different species. There is also a difference in this country, for what is fashion but another modification of caste? So long as people of

fashion keep me in countenance, I need not regard what the rest of the world may say or think of me."

Now as Fitzgeorge could not have the enjoyment of all the pleasures which he anticipated, he was driven into the alternative of taking advantage of such as were offered him. By this time he had become a little more familiar with the annoyance of duns, and he was also in the nature of events much nearer to the possession of the title and estates. So there was still something of hope and something of enjoyment. His moral sentiment, however, had experienced no improvement by the discipline which he had undergone; his resentful feelings were rather stronger, and his selfishness more calculating. It has been stated in the course of this narrative, that Lady Louisa, the publicly acknowledged wife of Fitzgeorge, had given birth to a daughter, concerning whom he had thought comparatively little, inasmuch as he had some hope that by a new wife he might have a son

who should inherit his title and estates: but when the Simkin conspiracy was so completely exploded, that there seemed to be no immediate prospect of obtaining matrimonial liberation; and when every day rendered it more and more probable that this daughter would be his sole heiress, he thought more of her, and was more anxiously concerned about her. Knowing that he was at enmity with his own father, he thought it not improbable that his daughter might be reared in enmity to her father, especially under the pupilage of a mother who had been discarded and persecuted and conspired against. Moreover, as it was an object to continue all manner of annoyances against the forsaken wife, it was a very convenient mode of tormenting her to exercise parental despotism over her daughter.

We talk very pathetically of the great abomination of slavery; but we think comparatively little, or indeed nothing, of the state of slavery in which the laws of England place women and

children. That women should have any voice in the legislature seems to be universally considered exactly as absurd, as if it should be proposed to call brute animals into council to deliberate on the well-being of the state. Power is in the hands of men; and the men not only use the power individually, but collectively, by making laws. All the laws that are made concerning women evidently show that they have been made by men. Women and children are by the laws regarded quite as much the property of men, as the negro slaves in the West India islands are taken and believed to be the property of the whites who have bought or who do inherit them. The courtesy of individuals is sometimes better than the law; but if by any chance one of the ungentler sex should take it into his head to torment a woman to the utmost extent of the law's allowance, he may make her miserable enough.

The readiest way by which Fitzgeorge could distress and punish Louisa was by means of

withdrawing, as he had power to do, her daughter from her society; and when there is taken into consideration the profligate life which he himself had led and still was leading, it was indeed a most insulting mockery to pretend a moral motive in removing her from her mother's protection. By this step, also, he was preparing for himself additional mortifications in the hostility which he was necessarily nurturing in his daughter against himself. Gentle as the gentle sex may be, mild, calm, and quiescent in the ordinary current of life, yet it has a marvellous degree of firmness against opposition, and is capable of no small portion of passive resistance. Whom had the young Louisa to love but her mother? Surely woman's whole life and being are love; and when that love is circumscribed, it glows with greater ardour. When Fitzgeorge neglected his wife, it did not follow that the mother should neglect her child, or that the child should neglect her mother; but it was exceedingly natural that being deprived of the

love and attention of a husband, Lady Louisa should regard her only child, her only tie to life's interests, with a feeling of increased and still increasing attachment;—for they who are loved and admired by all, think little of the love and admiration of any one; but they who are loved by one only, and are neglected, despised, or persecuted by all the rest of the little or great world in which they live, think much of the only one that loves them deeply and sincerely.

The young Louisa was a child of great feeling and of strength of mind, capable of strong emotion and deep affection. Many were the instructors who were placed about her to furnish her mind with knowledge, and readily did she receive the instructions which were communicated to her. If Fitzgeorge himself, who had been against his inclination forced into a marriage which his repugnance converted into a greater annoyance than it needed to have been, had been possessed of sufficient good sense to

take delight in the expanding powers and sweet affections of his child, he might have had a pleasure in her society that would have been some compensation for the wearisomeness of his wife's company, and which, perhaps, would ultimately have rendered her tolerable. But pleasures of this kind were not his forte or his ambition;—there was dandyism, frivolity, display, even in his moral and intellectual pleasures. He had taste—and sentiment, such as it was—but he loved the magnificent and the superb. He certainly admired pictures, but he also admired frames; he loved music, but he also loved a superbly-decorated music-room, richly-gilded harps, rosewood cases for pianofortes, and morocco bindings for his music-books; he loved books, but he loved bindings as well; he enjoyed magnificent scenery, but he thought that it never looked so well as when seen through plate glass. He would have loved his child, but she partook rather too much, for his taste, of her mother's utter unaffectedness.

Fitzgeorge, as the reader of this romance may have already seen, was in his tastes thoroughly artificial; whatever was delightful to him in his home was that which was brought there by the artists who furnished his house. If he sat with his Emily, enjoying the pleasure of her conversation, he also enjoyed an admiration of the sumptuous chairs on which they sat;—if he enjoyed his fireside, it was partly owing to the taste of the ironmonger who had devised and constructed so superb a stove. All his interests and affections dwelt on life's surface, and he resembled the rustic who thought that he should like to live on peacocks because they had such fine feathers.

When he first dismissed his wife from his roof, his child was in her infancy; all her habits were to be formed, and her affections were waiting for their impulse. Whom, then, but her mother, could she love? And because she loved that mother, she and her mother suffered much. There were many hours when she was

her mother's only companion and only confidant. There were seasons when she heard her mother's half-stifled sighs, and saw those tears which looked more sad because her mother strove to hide them. There is a touching beauty in a tear which is brushed away with a studied unconcern; but when a child's look is fixed upon them as they fall from a mother's eye, they rise too rapidly, and they fall too thickly, to be easily dispersed.

"Mamma, you are not happy."

"It is not the lot of mortals, my sweet child, to pass through life without tears. When you have lived in the world as long as I have, you will have cause for sorrow; you will remember the days of your childhood, and sigh over the memory of them; you will remember the friends of your youth, and mourn at the thought that they are no more."

"But you are not in mourning, my dear Mamma."

"I am not, my child, but sorrow often out-

lives the sign of it. There are moments when I feel unhappy on account of the absence of friends whom I have lost for many years."

"But how is it, my dear Mamma, that sometimes I see you look cheerful and happy, and then all on a sudden you cease to look so, and your eyes are filled with tears, when I cannot see that any thing has occurred to give you pain? The day before yesterday, when Mrs. Simkin called to see you, and I was brought into the room, you were very cheerful, and you laughed very heartily at something that Mrs. Simkin said; she is indeed a very laughable woman. I am sure that I could not have laughed so had I felt unhappy. And even after Mrs. Simkin was gone, and you desired my governess to leave me, you were still cheerful, and you told me some pretty stories, and you talked to me about my dancing, and when I was showing you some of my steps, you got up and danced with me. Can people dance when they are unhappy? Then, when nothing had happened

to make you unhappy, suddenly you sat down and drew me towards you, and pressed me in your arms, and sighed as if your heart would burst."

"My sweet child, I cannot explain all this to you. You are too young to understand it."

"But shall I be so sorrowful when I am grown up?"

"I hope not, my child."

"Well, my dear mamma, I wish I knew what it is that makes you so unhappy; for when you are in your sorrowful moods, I feel I can hardly tell you how, without talking nonsense."

"My dear child, I think you are talking nonsense now, by saying that you cannot tell me how you feel without talking nonsense?"

"I will tell you, then, what I mean, perhaps you can understand me. I feel unhappy that I cannot be unhappy with you, and that I cannot weep and sigh as you do. But when you are happy I can be very happy with you; I can laugh and dance and enjoy myself very heartily. Why can you not always be happy?"

"My thoughts will not let me be so, my dear child."

"Then I hope that when I grow up I shall be as thoughtless as I am now."

"Rather hope, my sweet one, that your thoughts will have pleasanter recollections to dwell upon."

"But when any thing makes me sorry, I am sorry for a little while, and then when I have cried I soon forget it, and am sorry for it no more. Mamma, when you are made sorry, why can you not cry about it at once and then forget it for ever as I do?"

"That is a question not easy to be answered to your comprehension, dear child. While your childhood lasts, endeavour to enjoy it, make the most of its little pleasures, and the least of its little pains."

"I wish, mamma, to make your pains less."

"You do, my pretty one, your society is my greatest comfort—my only comfort."

Here the mother wept copiously and passion-

ately, and the trembling child stood by her in a distressing, because imperfect sympathy.

"Dear, dear mamma, if my society is a comfort to you, why does the mention of it make you weep so bitterly? Speak to me, pray speak to me."

"I will, I will." Then more tears came, but the passion was calmer, and the mother replied, "I weep, my dear child, at the mention of your society, because I know that I cannot have it always, it must soon be taken from me."

"No, no, I will not leave you, I will not be taken from you—at least not till I am married; and indeed I think I will never consent to be married, for marriage does not seem to make people happy."

"You must leave me, my beloved child; your father insists upon it."

"I will not leave you; for then I shall have nobody to love, and nobody to love me."

"Yes, my dear child, you must love your father, and your father will love you."

"Oh, no, I cannot love my father, for he does not love you; and he cannot love me, because he does not love you, whom I love so dearly. Indeed, how can he love me? He has seen me very seldom, and has never seemed to take an interest in me. He has not been to me as you have, nor have I been to him as I have been to you. He has never smiled with my joys, and I have never wept with his sorrows. Perhaps he has no sorrows."

"Oh, yes, he must have sorrows, though they do not melt away in tears. They pass away, perhaps, in awful frowns and furious indignation."

"I would rather weep than be angry, yet when I see you weep I feel angry, for I am disturbed at the thought that any one should be so wicked as to cause you sorrow."

Scenes like the above often passed between mother and daughter, and they were not best calculated to impress the daughter with any great degree of respectful reverence for her

father. And when she heard that it was the express command of her father that she should be altogether separated from her mother, and that she should be placed under a totally different system; then did she regard him with a sad and serious feeling of repugnance. She then regarded her father as being influenced by a cruel and bitter feeling, as delighting more in the exercise of a father's authority, than in the development of a father's love and kindness.

So far, indeed, as paternal affection is concerned, Fitzgeorge had not before him any good or valuable example. He had not experienced affection or friendship from his own father, and was not prepared to exercise it towards his own child. And, notwithstanding this, Fitzgeorge yet entertained the idea, that life was capable of affording him a high degree of happiness and enjoyment. No stronger proof can be given of the weakness of his mind and the illogicalness of his reasoning than this ima-

gination, that the happiness of life consisted in, and might be produced by, matters altogether external and superficial. Myriads, as well as he, have made the mistake, and of course have found it to be a mistake;—and yet very few of them even when they have discovered their error and have felt it by bitter experience, have had wisdom or magnanimity enough to acknowledge it even to themselves; but they have gone on in the same track, and have used all manner of means, and have sacrificed all manner of principle, to obtain that enjoyment which they have fancied to belong to matters of an external nature. With different minds, the disappointment produces different effects. Some retain amidst the ruins of their hopes and the wreck of their expectations a lively, light-hearted gaiety, laughing at the world and all hat it contains; and even though themselves may be impoverished by extravagance, and have become contemptible in the sight of all honest

and sober men by reason of the recklessness of their sensuality, they go laughing on as they sink lower and lower in the dust of abasement, till at last they vanish from the world nobody knows or cares when, where, or how. But others when the world has disappointed them, or rather when they have disappointed themselves by means of the world, are not only miserable because they are not happy, but are angry and morose, superbly savage and indignant, finding in a mighty haughtiness of manner, a little consolation for the absence of that gaiety of heart, after which they have been vainly and even painfully striving.

Of this latter number was Fitzgeorge; he had formed to himself a scheme of enjoyment in which he had been greatly disappointed, but he would not let the world know how deeply he felt the disappointment. He looked upon the world proudly and morosely, he saw myriads around him happier than himself, and he

thought that they ought not to be so, and he hated them for being so. But if any one in the whole compass of his acquaintance more deeply moved his indignation than another, it was his wife. Though she dwelt not under the same roof with himself, though he never saw her, and though every luxury was around and about him, yet the thought of this living clog dwelt upon his mind and he wished more than he would say. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that he should listen eagerly to any reproachful rumours against her, and of course, after heeding those rumours and believing them as far as his wish, and much farther than the evidence, it was natural enough that he should continue the prosecution which he had begun, and that if the law did not give him the liberty that he desired, he should use for the purpose of annoyance, all the power which the law did give him. The power which the law gave him, was power over his

own child, which power he exercised tyrannically and insultingly;—tyrannically, because he tore a weeping child from the bosom of a weeping mother;—insultingly, because he affirmed that the mother was not a fit companion or instructress of her child.—She must have been bad indeed, if she was not much better than the father.—However, Fitzgeorge removed the child from the mother and placed her under other instructors. So far he had persecuted and insulted his wife as much as lay in his power, and was prepared to take every opportunity that might offer for continuing the system of persecution.

Fitzgeorge was now surrounded in his own undivided mansion by friends and flatterers, who paid him homage almost amounting to idolatry. His wife was away from him, his daughter had been separated from her mother, his house was splendidly furnished, his table was superb with plate and culinary skill, his tailors had done the utmost that art could do

for his form, but was he happy?—No.—No—no. He was miserable because he was fat, he was miserable because he was forty—he was miserable because he could not be all his life a slender youth as full of graces and affectations as a dancing-master's perfumed apprentice.

CHAPTER IV.

FRIENDS AND ENEMIES.

To a selfish man, an old friend is as great a nuisance as a new enemy; because the oldness of his friendship gives him a kind of liberty which is not agreeable to the pride of selfishness; and because the amusement of his company is abated for want of novelty. Fitzgeorge was not at all inclined to undergo any voluntary annoyances for the sake of old acquaintance. He recollected the time when his old acquaintance were new, and that time seen through the vista of past years looked bright and gay. He forgot that even then he was but laying the

foundation of his temple of hope and happiness, he forgot that even then he was merely full of promise, and that pleased as he might be with all around him, his principal bliss was then in the future tense. But now, that which had been the future was become the past. And how did it look?—Flat, stale, and unprofitable! That seemed to be best which was most remote. Reverting to the past, his very boyhood, from which he had been so eager to emerge, seemed to have been a far pleasanter state than his present glorious middle of manhood. Surely nature by giving to man the power of anticipation and reflection, intends to make some amends for the harshness of reality by the bright and soft contrast of imagination! But is it not very strange—can any thing be strange that is universal?—What then shall we say?—Is it not well worthy of remark that during the whole course of life, man is grumbling at the present as a condition of misery and annoyance, looking forward to the future for something really worth

having and enjoying; and yet as he advances in life, finds that every thing is worse and worse; and that the past, especially if it be past a very long while ago, was the only truly happy period of existence? The golden age is the age of recollected youth; it is not the age of actually existing youth, and we never know that it is, but in a lapse of years we find out that it has been.

How mysterious a thing is being! Fitzgeorge felt it to be so, but he did not think or did not apply his thoughts to the practical management of his mind, so that what ought to have been to him a means of wisdom and a source of sweet philosophy became a wearisome annoyance. He sacrificed his mind, if he ever had any, to cooks, tailors, perfumers, and jewellers. He was so much taken up with the surface of life that he never thought of entering into its substance. He even mistook, and that almost wilfully, the intention of nature, or more properly speaking of that great Being who rules nature, in exer-

cising the mind with the discipline of pain; for nature, a name, be it observed, which we here use to avoid an irreverent repetition of a greater name, exercises the mind with pain in order that by feeling it may be led to thought, and by thought be led to rational happiness. For a rational being can be only happy through rational means. But Fitzgeorge would not think; he could hope and wish and thus push his happiness before him, which he could never overtake any more than a man can stand on the shadow of his own head in a long summer evening.

Now Fitzgeorge began to be tired of some of his friends; not, perhaps, before they had begun to be tired of him. They had found that he would do them no good; which discovery came to them in the shape of the proposition that they could do him no good. It is, perhaps, pretty much the same thing; for he that is evil to himself to whom will he be good? He was tired of himself and so he thought that he was tired of

his friends. When indeed a man is tired of himself he is tired of every thing; for every man is his own world, and the heart makes its own clouds and its own sunshine. He was also tired of his enemies; and now about this time he felt himself happy to get rid of one of them, and that was a principal one, no less a personage than Mr. Graves. This Mr. Graves, who though not an old man had been a long while in the service of the family of Fitzgeorge, had had in that service a great deal of hard work, and a great many anxious hours. He had been, by his ambition of making himself a great man in the service of the family, compelled to a constant vigilance and unremitting diligence. He had endeavoured to manage Lord and Lady Fitzgeorge, and to humour them both in their whims and caprices; this he found no easy task, for they often had different and opposite crotchets. As for the tenants he cared nothing about them so long as he could keep his own place and manage his master and mistress, and he found

that the most effectual way to manage them was to humour them and to be subservient to them. Now Lord Fitzgeorge was a very litigious man, and exceeding fond of going to law with his neighbours, if it were merely about a load of straw. Mr. Graves, indeed, had sense enough to know that law always costs more than it is worth; but instead of dissuading his master from involving himself in law-suits, he rather encouraged him in it; for by that he kept himself in his place and increased himself in consequence. He must, indeed, have known that the estate could not bear the ruinous and heavy expense; but that signified nothing to him, so long as he could retain his place and influence. Though as for the matter of influence, every body knew that he was more influenced than influencing. Lord Fitzgeorge, indeed, for the gratification of his own taste, would have been at law all his life long, and Mr. Graves was not by any means unwilling to humour him. The estate, however, was very much injured by it,

and the tenants and friends of Lord Fitzgeorge would have dissuaded him from continuing this ruinous process, but Mr. Graves kept all advice away from his master's ear, but that which he was pleased to give him himself; and that advice of course was merely the echo of his lordship's own fancies. Mr. Graves also was particularly careful to keep from the ear of Lord Fitzgeorge all complaints of the tenants, and if any by accident did approach his lordship, the crafty steward had no hesitation in telling his master that the tenants in general were exceedingly well satisfied, and that it was only a few idle and discontented fellows, that ought to be turned out of their farms, who made any complaint at all; and his lordship was very willing to believe him.

Things, however, at last went on so badly, the lawyers were such a set of rogues, that Lord Fitzgeorge was sadly cheated and was nigh being absolutely ruined. Mr. Graves had so far committed himself that he could neither

proceed with honour, nor recede with safety, so he took to drinking. He always had a propensity to that vice from the very first, but in consequence of the scrape into which he had brought his master's affairs, he stuck to the bottle closer than ever. He was never able to do any thing in the way of business till he was half seas over; and sometimes in his drunken fits he would issue most extravagant orders, and involve poor Lord Fitzgeorge in most enormous expenses, the consequence of which was that the estate became mortgaged to a ruinous excess. Of course Augustus could not be very well pleased with that, for he was afraid, that when he might come into possession, he should not have enough to indulge himself in those pleasures and pomps of architectural magnificence which he anticipated. However, hard work and hard drinking were too much for Mr. Graves, they at last carried him off. The tenants were not sorry for that, nor was Augustus Fitzgeorge. But Lord Fitzgeorge himself was very

much troubled to find a successor for Mr. Graves; and well indeed he might be, for the estate had got into such a condition that it required no common ingenuity to keep things at all together. The place of course was advertised in all the newspapers, and many applications were made for it. But it was soon seen that many of the applicants knew nothing of the business and duties of the situation, that they merely wanted to get a snug birth for themselves, and to have the means of providing for a family; for Lord Fitzgeorge's steward had a great many good places at his disposal in his lordship's kitchen, stable, farm-yard, and dairy. But his lordship wanted for steward a man who had ability to do something more than merely to give away good places to his cousins and his bastards. Among other applicants for the place was Lionel Leppard. Now Lord Fitzgeorge did not like this man at all, because he had taken part with the tenants against the late steward, and he was also a man of somewhat

obstinate temperament, and withal a little conscientious, so that he was not likely to be half so useful to his master as Mr. Graves had been.

Futhermore, Lionel Leppard had once very much offended Lord Fitzgeorge, by using some language in the steward's hall very derogatory to landlords. He had said, or something to that purpose, that estates might be cultivated with landlords, but could not be cultivated without tenants and labourers. Now Lord Fitzgeorge himself had a very high idea of the dignity and importance of landlords, thinking them to be of infinitely more value than tenants or labourers. He thought, it was indeed the fault of his education, poor man, he thought that estates were made for landlords, and that the only use of tenants was to pay rents, and that the only use of labourers was to cultivate the earth, and that all this was for the sake of the high and mighty landlord who was the peculiar if not sole care of the overruling Providence that governs all things. Lionel Leppard, however, had thought

otherwise; he had imagined that there was as much importance and value in tenants as in landlords, in labourers as in tenants; and, perhaps, he might have thought, but he had too much wit to say it in the presence or hearing of any of the Fitzgeorge family, that there was no one who could be better spared than the landlord, who did nothing but ride about in a fine coach and look big.

Be it, however, as it may, Lord Fitzgeorge could not help himself, but was forced to take into his service this Lionel Leppard, who after all his big talk to Mr. Graves, and his mighty profession of managing matters better than any one that had gone before him, made no great hand at his office; the tenants knew no difference, and the estate did not prosper much better than before.

Now Fitzgeorge thought as an old acquaintance of his had got the management of his father's affairs he should be able, perhaps, to get a little more money out of the old gentleman;

but it was all the same as attempting to get blood out of a post. There was none to be got. Fitzgeorge therefore very properly said to himself, "What is the use of friends that are of no use?" Then he began to speculate much about friendsphi, but that puzzled him as all other attempts at moral or intellectual analysis did. He knew exceedingly well the anatomy of a coat, but he was not a good hand at anatomizing the human heart.

In a short time Lionel Leppard, like his predecessor Mr. Graves, was worried to death by the fatigues and botheration of his office; and Fitzgeorge pretended to be mighty sorry for the loss of his dear friend. There was not, however, mnch real sorrow in the matter. The sorrows of Fitzgeorge were only for the personal inconvenience which he was exposed to, and it was no great personal inconvenience to be deprived of one who rather reminded him of humiliating passages in his past life, and who was not likely to be of any great service to him in assisting

him in the matter of money. Lionel Leppard was a very good companion for Fitzgeorge when they were both in their best humours, for there was much life in their conversation, there was wit in one and the relish of wit in the other. But for a regular thick and thin friend Leppard was not well adapted; he had notions of independence, and of a less bending integrity than suited the taste or convenience of Fitzgeorge. So when he was gone, though he might be missed for a moment he was not deeply and permanently lamented. Thus friend and enemy were removed. Graves was gone, and Leppard soon did follow him.

Lord Bacon says that a man dies as often as he loses a friend, and it may also be said that a man dies as often as he loses an enemy. For what is life but a compages of interests and sensations? and the interests are greater than the sensations, inasmuch as sensation is external, and interests are in our very hearts and in the nucleus of our being. For a while man lives making new friends and new enemies, and

so long his life is increasing in the intensity of its interests and the multitudinous delightfulness of its being; for as friends are not unmixedly agreeable, enemies are not unmixedly disagreeable. But a time comes slowly perhaps, unobservedly but surely, when the mental elasticity abates, when a man becomes too prudent to make new enemies, too passionless to make new friends. Then we begin to die—our leaves are then falling on the ground, we partake less and less of the name and nature of legion, our expansiveness suffers a reaction, and we are contracting again to the almost solitary unit from which we set out.

Fitzgeorge observed not this contraction, for his friends fell away from him with no greater rending than the dry branch breaks from the withered tree. He thought not that here were monitions for himself in the mutations of life. He had an art of living so thoroughly in the contemplation of his own selfish sensations and proud imaginations, that friends were not to him

as they are to the great multitude of the human race, he was surrounded by them, but did not sympathize with them beyond the apprehension of their convenience to himself. He was very happy in imagining and constructing a splendid mansion, and he was happy in thought of the eyes that should gaze upon it with admiration; but he cared not whose eyes they were, so long as they were admiring eyes. He was happy in the admiration of himself as constructed by the art of the tailor, and in the thought of the admiration which would greet him as he passed along the streets, or rode in the park. He was happy in the possession of many brilliant toys to which he cleaved with a child-like affection. Friends might sink into the silent tomb, coldness might creep upon the heart, and death might relax the cordially grasping hand; but if the spring of a musical snuff-box should break, an artist in mechanics might restore it, and the music would be as sweet as ever. Bright eyes might grow dim and vanish into

darkness, but the brilliant diamond would sparkle for ever brighter and sweeter than human eyes. He that dined at the table of Fitzgeorge to-day, might to-morrow be served up himself as a sweet morsel for the worms, but cooks would not be wanting in Fitzgeorge's kitchen, nor gilded plate upon his sideboard, nor admiring guests at his table.

Still there remained of his friends the most supple and subservient of all; still, with a spaniel-like fidelity and patient servility, Drury Borrowman was at his service, finding, however, no other reward of his services than the pleasure of servitude. No one ever served another with more constant fidelity than did Borrowman serve Fitzgeorge. There was more than zeal, there was devotedness in the service.

At length, however, the messenger that comes for all came for Borrowman, and where did it find him? not in the mansion of Fitzgeorge, not at the table of him whom he had served through life with an undeviating and disinterested inte-

grity; but far away from the scenes of his friendship and fidelity. Fitzgeorge was gay and glorious, bright and brilliant, courting and catching admiration, surrounded by every luxury, saturated with life's indulgences, devising new forms of splendour, and new modes of enjoyment. But Drury Borrowman had ceased to please. He was in the numerous list of Fitzgeorge's forgotten ones. And what more could he expect? what else could he expect? neglect was the natural termination of such services rendered to such a friend. For many months Fitzgeorge had seen nothing of Borrowman, and of course had thought as little as he had seen; for he had given Borrowman to understand that his company was no longer desired, and his services for the future might be dispensed with. There came at length to the ears of Fitzgeorge a report that Borrowman was hastening to the repose which mortal cares cannot disturb, and that in his passage thither he stood in need of that assistance which is almost as painful to re-

ceive as to need. A late, reluctant, chilling charity was the first and last service which the Honourable Augustus rendered to his steadiest, surest, and most unflinching friend.

Fitzgeorge was one of those persons who are never likely to be more alone than they wish to be. He had the means of attracting society and even of selecting it. Not very remarkable either for wisdom or for goodness, yet his rank and fashion could always command, if he desired it, the society of those who are pleased to call themselves the wise and good. He was so much of the gentleman, that he might with impunity indulge in those trangressions which would be the death without redemption of any other man's reputation. This may be thought a privilege; but it is a privilege of very equivocal and doubtful good, or rather it may be said, of certain evil. For man is a dependent being and must needs be dependent, as he is placed in society to form a co-operating part of one great mass; he is not merely gifted with impulses that move

him, but with certain susceptibilities by which these impulses may be directed, and may be preserved from doing great injury to society and to himself. The principal of these susceptibilities is a sense of shame. Suppose all restraint from this cause to be removed, then the check which prevents man from injuring society being taken away, he is left at liberty not only to be injurious to society, but to be injurious to himself; and so constructed is man for social life, that he cannot be injurious to society in any great degree without hurting himself, nor can he deeply injure himself without transgressing the laws which bind him to his duty to society. To be freed, then, from the restraints which ordinarily influence human beings, may be considered a privilege so far as liberty is concerned, but is not a blessing so far as happiness is concerned. This Fitzgeorge did feel; but he knew not on what principle it was that he found it impossible for him to enjoy happiness, notwithstanding all the

pains he took, and all the instruments which were afforded him.

"'Tis strange," said he, in his meditations, "that a person situated as I am, and endowed with so many privileges and honours above the rest of mankind, should not be able to pass through life without these incessant annoyances. Are all mankind miserable, and are many of them more miserable than I am? I suppose it must be so; for I am often reading in the papers accounts of wretched men destroying themselves. A coroner's jury politely calls them mad; but it is misery that has driven them mad. Now, with all the annoyances that I have suffered, and am yet enduring, I have never been driven to think of that mode of ending my troubles. Perhaps, then, my peculiar privilege is, not so much to be happier than the rest of the world as to be less miserable than most people. I have often seen people in stations inferior to mine, whom I have almost envied. Perhaps the same persons have envied me. I

am now in what is called the middle of life, and I can recollect no part of my life more delightful than my first moments of liberty and hope when I came of age, and was the object of universal admiration. And yet, if I recollect aright, great part of the pleasure of that time was the pleasure of hope, the hope of what I should be in after days. Many of those days are gone—and what am I now—and what have I been? If I have not enjoyed what I once hoped to enjoy, I certainly have enjoyed the pleasures of hope in their full extent. And is there no room for hope even now? Yes, there is abundant room. I am even yet in the very prime and vigour of my life. I have many years to look forward to. I have higher honours to reach, and greater wealth to enjoy. I am now under restraints, from which in a few years I shall be delivered. I shall yet have it in my power to indulge my passion for architecture, and to display my taste in furniture. I may yet be the mark of admiration, and the model of excel-

lence in manners and in dress. I am now in the prime of life—in the strength and vigour of my faculties. I have learned something by experience, and am wiser than when I first commenced my career of brilliancy. And in spite of all drawbacks, I have been a person of distinction and consequence, and am so still, and shall be so still more. What cause have I then to despair? The world has not been aware of my annoyances and troubles. People have looked upon me, and have seen me for the most part only in my glory and pomp, which they have no doubt envied. They have not looked into my thoughts, nor shall they ever. Surely there is something delightful and pleasurable in the power of keeping people at a distance, and in having the distant respect of the admiring multitude. If I cannot be happy, who can? I am strangely perplexed to account for the fact, that with me the experiment of life has hitherto failed. Perhaps what remains may be more fortunate. If I thought that Cicero's

Treatise on Old Age could convince me by its reasoning, I would read it again, and look forward to the latter days of my life, in hope of receiving in them a compensation for the disappointments of my younger days. But no—no!—'tis absolutely impossible, in the nature of things, that old age should have comforts or joys which youth and manhood have not. Of that which is pleasant the dregs are frequently unpleasant; surely, therefore, of that which is unpleasant we cannot expect to find the dregs pleasant."

CHAPTER V.

A CHANGE WITH SOME HOPE.

It must be acknowledged that there is something superficially marvellous in the fact that a man, not lacking an average share of understanding, should give the whole strength and application of his mind to one object and fail in that; yet the wonder ceases when we take into consideration that the object thus sought after is in its nature unattainable. Fitzgeorge was seeking after a degree of content with mere physical enjoyment, which no intelligent being can possibly enjoy. He reasoned almost childishly on this one topic, and was disap-

pointed because he did not find himself so happy in his splendid and luxurious mode of life as he appeared to be, to those who were in situations far remote from such splendour and luxury. He forgot that life's pleasures grew out of its pains, and that its pains grew out of its pleasures;—therefore he sought out with great diligence all modes of indulgence, but there arose from them all an after reckoning of wearisome disgust, to say nothing of duns. There is a little pleasure in the ingenious construction and combination of a new kind of punch, there is a pleasure in drinking it, and there is a pleasure in hearing other drinkers praise it. There is a pleasure, too, in the bright and brilliant conversation which sparkles and dazzles, and pleases the vanity of the excited talkers, and which newspapers are pleased to call "the feast of reason and the flow of soul." The pleasure increases as the drink mounts higher with its fumes into the region of the brain, and there would be a mortification in

quitting voluntarily a delightful excitement; so indulgence goes on till it becomes a nuisance, and all is blather, and bother, and babble and brawl: so much for the feast of reason and the flow of soul. Then the next morning come nasty headachs, tottering knees, weak hands, dull eyes, and a general unstringing of the system. This is bad enough—but the cup of misery rises still higher by the assistance of the wine-merchant's bill.—Moreover, it is a very pretty thing indeed, to have a great many precious stones, curiously set and formed into divers ingenious devices; but these precious stones never look so well and so prettily, as they do the first time that they are worn and admired. It is delightful to have a variety of gold snuff-boxes set with diamonds and pearls, and fitted up with music, or with little birds that pop out of the lid and clap their little wings, and move their little beaks, and sing all as natural as life; but their first song is the pleasantest, and their music grows very annoying

when the jeweller's bill has been sent in time after time, accompanied with disagreeable importunities. It is pleasant also to survey a noble army of boots and breeches, and to have in one's own peculiar wardrobe, and for one's own peculiar use, clothing enough to supply a regiment of soldiers; but it is very unpleasant to pay for them, and still more to be unable to pay for them. Pleasures like these were enjoyed, and troubles like these were endured, by the Hon. Augustus Fitzgeorge, in the course of his eventful life. These pleasures and these troubles were also rather increasing than diminishing; so the life of Fitzgeorge was full of agitations.

But about this time an event took place, which made a change in the occupations, and gave a brightness to the prospects of our hero. We have said that Mr. Graves, who had been Lord Fitzgeorge's steward for so many years, was no more, and that his successor, Lionel Leppard, soon followed him. At the time of

which we are now writing, there was in that situation one Mr. Spenser, a good sort of man enough, but a bit of a spooney, having just wit enough to collect the rents and to keep the books; but he was not at all equal to any thing in the way of improving the estate. Lord Fitzgeorge had been almost all his life involved in law-suits, and when Mr. Graves was living, he took mighty delight in them, and conducted them, as he thought, with a great deal of skill, but in several cases he was outwitted, and Lord Fitzgeorge's estate suffered accordingly, being of necessity most deeply mortgaged. Now, when Mr. Spenser took the management of his lordship's estate, the law-suit was still going on, and Lord Fitzgeorge seemed very likely to get the better, not so much by the justice of the case, or by the dexterity of his steward, as by the clumsy conduct of the opposing party, who foolishly laid himself open to be completely defeated in a variety of points. At this juncture it so happened, that his lordship fell so ill as

to be incapable of attending to any business; it became, therefore, absolutely necessary that some one should be appointed to act for him. Fitzgeorge was now considerably more advanced in years than he had been on the former occasion, when Lady Fitzgeorge and Mr. Graves were preparing, in consequence of his lordship's illness, to take the sole management of the affairs into their own hands. Moreover, Lord Fitzgeorge himself was also considerably older, and of course the chances of his decease were greater. Lady Fitzgeorge and Mr. Spenser, therefore, thought that they ought not to offend or irritate Augustus, by leaving him out of their party in the consultation as to what was to be done in the present emergency. Yet at the same time they did not like to trust every thing in his hands—so they entered into a kind of compromise or capitulation; indeed, they thought that if they did not do so, the tenants would be apt to suspect something wrong. They agreed, therefore, to let Augustus take a share,

and a pretty considerable one too, in the management of affairs.

Now this Mr. Spenser was one of the party who had been engaged in the investigation of Lady Louisa's conduct, and he had very decidedly expressed his opinion, that there was no ground whatever of any serious complaint against the lady. He had said that the whole affair was a mere matter of idle talk and ill-natured censoriousness on the part of Mr. and Mrs. Simkin. He was therefore very much afraid, that when Augustus should succeed to the title and estates, there would be a change not much to Mr. Spenser's advantage; so, by way of giving a hint that he would not interfere with Augustus in his endeavours to get rid of his wife, he signified his readiness to surrender all the memorandums which he had taken of the investigation, with a hint, however, at the same time, that he would publish them to the world, in order to show the meanness of the conspiracy, and the groundlessness of the ac-

cusation, if Augustus would not pledge himself to keep him in the stewardship, whatever might happen. This of course Fitzgeorge was ready enough to agree to, for he would not on any account have any suspicion thrown on the credibility of Mr. and Mrs. Simkin. He therefore accepted Mr. Spenser's offer, with the understanding, that in case of any future inquiry he should give all the weight of his ingenuity and sophistry against the accused—and as Mr. Spenser had been brought up to the law, he could easily do that.

It is a notion that some people have taken into their heads for want of consideration, that noblemen who have large estates and a numerous tenantry, have nothing to do but to enjoy the pomps and vanities and luxuries of life. This is, indeed, a very great error, for they have a great deal more to do, especially if they happen to be engaged in litigation. Augustus Fitzgeorge, himself, we rather incline to believe, entertained some such erroneous notion as this,

and supposed that all that he should have to do as Lord Fitzgeorge, would be to dwell in more splendid mansions, and to entertain large parties. Even, however, as the mere *locum tenens* of Lord Fitzgeorge, he found a great deal more occupation than he had calculated upon, and much more than suited his habits of indolence, and love of rest. He had imagined that the principal difference to him would be the command of more money, and the enjoyment of more honour. These advantages he certainly had, but with them came much more labour, and toil than pleased him. This was, indeed, very provoking, because it seemed to be an additional illustration of the mingled aspect of human life, and a further proof that every advantage is attended and accompanied by some disadvantage.

There was, however, some hope in the change which had thus taken place in his condition; for a promise seemed now held out to him that he would not long be kept from the full enjoy-

ment of his title and estates, and there was also a prospect that he should be able to get altogether rid of his wife. For this purpose he adopted most ingenious policy. He began now to see, or to pretend to see, that the friends with whom he had hitherto associated, and the companions whom he had heretofore kept, were not suitable associates for him now, in his more advanced years, and in his more important situation; so he attached himself to his father's friends, and they were glad of his countenance and patronage, for they saw that in the course of nature he could not be long out of possession of the estates and title. They received him, therefore, with the utmost cordiality, and they were prepared to go any lengths to serve him, provided they did not put themselves to any inconvenience; that is, to no other inconvenience than the loss of their characters, which, to them, indeed, did not signify much, for they were as well lost as kept, perhaps better. He now thought that he should be sure

to get rid of his wife, which step was that on which he had set his heart, and which he had considered as a *sine qua non* towards the pride and happiness which he should enjoy when he should become Lord Fitzgeorge. To his domestic or private wife, Emily, he was still attached, as much perhaps as he could be attached to any one personally, or affectionately, but she could not be his publicly acknowledged wife; and he was desirous of having a public wife for the exhibition of drapery, jewellery, decorations, and all the paraphernalia which make the "human form divine" a clumsy imitation of a peacock.

Finding now that his new friends, Mr. Spenser and his coadjutors, were prepared to regard Lady Louisa as not altogether innocent of the crimes imputed to her, and knowing that his old friends had already declared their opinion of her guilt, he concluded that now there would be nobody to say a word in her behalf, and that of course all the world would believe any evil

stories that might be invented. But, alas! such is the frailty of human hopes that he was grievously disappointed here: for as his new friends had changed their minds, his old friends had changed theirs also. And while the steward Spenser, and all those that were with him, began to think that Lady Louisa was rightly accused, those on the other side, who had been the friends of Augustus, began to think that she had been falsely accused. So Fitzgeorge gained nothing by the change.

The next step towards preparing the minds of the public and of his neighbours for another accusation, was to circulate with great diligence the rumour that they who had formerly thought the Lady Louisa innocent had now changed their minds, and had come to the conclusion that she was guilty; but, unfortunately the other party let it be known that they also had changed their and minds, that from believing her to be guilty they now believed her to be innocent. The change, therefore, which Fitzgeorge had thought a mighty

thing in his favour, amounted to nothing, or indeed, to worse than nothing; for the public, seeing the facility with which both parties changed their minds, according as they stood in favour or not, naturally concluded that the only real evidence of guilt was in the wish of Augustus. While, then, Augustus fancied that a change had taken place in his favour, so far as the influencing of the public opinion was concerned, the fact happened to be quite the reverse; for the public, who, in the first instance, saw a division of opinion, knew not which was right and which was wrong; but when both parties changed opinion so readily, then the public saw and knew clearly enough that the whole affair was a mere contrivance, and a very clumsy one too; that there was no truth or honesty in the parties, but that they were ready to say or unsay any thing that their feeders might tell them.

Now Mr. and Mrs. Simkin were in hopes that as Augustus Fitzgeorge had got the ma-

nagement of the estates into his hands in a great measure, and as the old gentleman was in bad health, and soon likely to make a vacancy, there would be a very good opportunity for renewing their accusation, especially since they had heard that Mr. Spenser and his party had intimated a change in their opinion. By this time the worthy couple had reconsidered their evidence, and had concocted their story with greater consistency; therefore they gave Mr. Spenser a hint, that if he wished to have the matter set at rest, they were perfectly competent now to give such a coherent testimony, and on oath too, as must procure a verdict from any jury. Mr. Spenser, therefore, hastened to lay before Augustus Fitzgeorge the intimation which he had received from the Simkin family.

"I am afraid," said Fitzgeorge, "that it will answer no purpose. What is your own opinion, Spenser?"

Mr. Spenser was a very formal man, and in a

very prosy manner he replied, "If, sir, you would have me speak the truth—"

"Yes, yes," said Fitzgeorge, hastily interrupting him, "I would have you speak the truth on the present occasion, and on all occasions, except when I desire you to tell lies."

"The truth, then, is," replied Mr. Spenser, "that the character of the Simkins is such, that I do not think that any one would believe them even upon their oath; therefore swearing or not swearing all amounts to nothing. Your best policy now with respect to your wife, is to endeavour to get up a new accusation altogether. These Simkins were not well trained beforehand; and though they are ready to swear any thing, the worst of it is, they are too ready. If you yourself were to draw up the accusation, with all the particulars, they would swear to any thing that you might be pleased to dictate."

"Then you are of opinion," said Fitzgeorge,

"that it would not be politic to revive thi accusation?"

"I am most decidedly so. You will do better if you can contrive to have her surrounded by a new set of acquaintances; and if you can send some confidential person privately to watch all her movements, and to report every thing that can be construed into an evidence of guilt, always keeping in view the great truth, that nothing can be done without money."

"Believe me, Spenser," replied Fitzgeorge, "I am so anxious to get rid of her, that I would willingly pay for a divorce half as much as I gained by marrying her."

"But you see," replied Mr. Spenser, "that your situation is one of considerable difficulty and delicacy; you must not be too hasty—you must endeavour, the next time that you lay your plot, to have every thing consistent and coherent, otherwise your late friends, who knew the whole trick, will be able, by their knowledge, to thwart and defeat you."

Fitzgeorge took the steward by the hand very condescendingly, and said, "Spenser, you are a good fellow, and I am really inclined to think that my father's friends are my best friends, and that if I had consulted them in the first instance, they would have been of more service to me than my own friends have been."

"That they certainly would," replied Mr. Spenser, "for this plain reason, that your father's are men of business, and your own friends, or rather your old friends, were men of pleasure. To get through life, you may rest assured that nothing is like sticking close to business."

"Ah!" replied Fitzgeorge, with a sigh, "I never was a man of business, and I fear I never shall be. It is now too late in the day for me to think of acquiring new habits. I am already fifty years old and very fat—very fat indeed!"

"Not at all too much so," replied the polite steward, "for your time of life."

"Why, my good fellow, there is the very mischief; my corpulency reminds me of my time

of life. No, no, I shall never be a man of business. I find it troublesome enough already to have only the partial management of affairs; I am sure I know not what I shall do when the whole business devolves on me."

"Oh! you need give yourself no concern about that," answered Mr. Spenser; "your friends will take care to save you as much trouble as they possibly can."

"I tell you what, Mr. Spenser," replied Fitzgeorge, "I have no concern or care about the management of the estate, except as to the ways and means for the supply of my expenses; I shall leave every thing else to you, and to your friends; you will take care of me for your own sakes. So long as I don't want money, I shall find no fault with you; and if you give me no trouble, I shall give you none."

This was exactly the sort of arrangement to suit Mr. Spenser, for he was at one time very much afraid of losing his place, and he knew that if he should lose it, it would go very

hard with him to get a living, for he was not one of the brightest men in the world. So he found that it would be very good policy in him to be subservient to the humours of Fitzgeorge, and to indulge him in as much indolence as might please him. As Mr. Spenser belonged to that gulled and gulling fraternity called the wise and good, he endeavoured to bring Fitzgeorge to enrol himself in the same fraternity. Indeed, the very inheriting of the title and estates of Lord Fitzgeorge would give him a claim to rank with them, even at their head.

"You see," said Mr. Spenser, "what a great advantage it has always given to your father to be ranked among the wise and good, and to patronise them so much. If you can but get all the wise and good, as well as the fashionable world, to be of your side, you may then do any thing you please."

Fitzgeorge promised to take the matter into his most serious consideration. He knew, indeed, that he needed to be no wiser and better

than he ever had been: he knew that wisdom meant fashionable politics, and goodness meant fashionable religion. In fact, he did not care how wise and good he became, so that he might get rid of his wife.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TROUBLE OF A DAUGHTER.

If there were nothing else to convince the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge that he was no longer a very young gentleman, he might have inferred the fact from the circumstance, that his daughter was now grown up; and if he had been in the habit of anticipating inconveniences with as much inventive power as he had anticipated pleasures and luxuries, he would have looked forward with some apprehension to a difficulty in the management of the young lady. He might very naturally have supposed that, however disagreeable to himself the wife

might have been, yet it was possible that the mother was not disagreeable to the child. For the professed purpose of educating his daughter, he had caused her to be removed from her mother's roof, and he had thrown every obstacle in the way of their intercourse; but he could not remove from her mind all thought and recollection of her mother, or destroy the impressions of early affection. Now, as his daughter was coming of age, and was of course looking forward to greater liberty, it was clear that one use which she would make of that liberty would be to indulge herself in more unrestrained intercourse with her mother. From this would spring many annoyances and inconveniences to Fitzgeorge, therefore he was obliged to have recourse to all his wit and sagacity to prevent this. He knew what a plague he had been to his father when he was young, and he knew also what a plague his father had been to him; it seemed indeed to have been a fatality attending the family of Fitzgeorge that they were

destined to be torments to one another. But however much Augustus had endured from his father, he still had a little more power of independence when he came of age than a daughter could possibly have. Daughters, by the domineering contrivance of the male sex, are always in subjection, unless they choose that form of life which is unanimously ridiculed and insulted.

Fitzgeorge, seeing that his daughter had a spirit of independence, and knowing that when she should come of age he would not have so much power over her as he had during her minority, craftily endeavoured to have her married to some one over whom he could have so much influence as to urge him to restrain authoritatively all intercourse between the mother and daughter. For this end, after casting about for a long time to find a suitable person, he at last lighted upon one Sir Peter Lemon, a poor, simple, meagre shred of a baronet, of high family indeed, but of family so old as to be worn

out and reduced to shadows and debts. Now Sir Peter would have been very glad indeed of the fortune which he would have with the young Louisa, and therefore he entered into the scheme with great ardour and glee. He readily accepted the invitation of Augustus Fitzgeorge to come and pay his addresses to the young lady.

The young Louisa was handsome, cheerful, and good humoured, altogether unaffected and of most agreeable address. Sir Peter Lemon, though descended from a long line of illustrious ancestry, was not the most polished man that ever lived, but he was obstinate and self-willed, and seemed to promise that he would be an excellently domineering husband. In the presence of so fine a gentleman as the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge, Sir Peter Lemon looked altogether a very insignificant personage. Indeed he felt himself to be a mere nothing compared with the great man in whose company he was. He had been always accustomed to look upon greatness with respect, and as a young

man he also thought highly of the aged, and reverenced every indication of advanced years; among other indications he reverenced fat, and thought Fitzgeorge great by virtue of his bigness. Then again the sight of the splendour with which Fitzgeorge was surrounded, imposed very much upon his weak mind. Never had he in the whole course of his life seen such superbly furnished rooms, such magnificent carriages, such gorgeous liveries, such massive plate, such general and universal pomp in all the arrangements and decorations of a human being. Perhaps there is a natural instinct in those who love power and are unable to attain it by the strength of their own minds, to seek for it by means of appealing to the weakness of others' minds. The oriental despots are remarkable for their magnificence and the multitudious and costly decorations of their thrones, palaces and persons. No doubt it answers; it must greatly impose upon the minds of the beholders, and make the common people fancy that beings

so extraordinarily decorated, must have in them something superior to the common run of men. Hence in European countries, all public functionaries have some peculiar and superb decorations by which they are distinguished from other and common people. The Lord Mayor of London, for instance, has a remarkably fine coach; judges wear most awful wigs and tremendously fine scarlet gowns; all intended no doubt for the suppression of vice and immorality, and particularly well adapted to prevent poaching and sheep-stealing, blasphemy and sedition. Even the very parish beadle has a cocked hat with a garnish of copper lace, by means of which finery he keeps little boys quiet at church. Could a Lord Mayor administer justice without a mace, or could a parish beadle keep order in church without a copper-laced hat?

The reverence of finery is an essential part of the constitution of human nature; it certainly developed itself in Sir Peter Lemon, and that so

strongly, that Augustus Fitzgeorge himself discerned how deeply the young baronet was impressed. Taking advantage, therefore, of the awe with which the youth regarded him, he carried on by the haughtiness of his manner the imposition which was first effected by the splendour of his style of living. When therefore it appeared sufficiently evident that Sir Peter was duly aware of the high honour of being son-in-law to the Hon. Augustus Fitzgeorge, the crafty parent gave him to understand that such an honour ought to be considered worth any price of obedience to, or compliance with, the humours and will of his own honourable self.

"You do our family great honour," said Fitzgeorge, "by condescending to form an alliance with it by marriage."

"The honour is done to me," replied Sir Peter, "by so great a man as the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge condescending to receive me as a son-in-law."

"I beg Sir Peter that you would not mention it. You are a man of discernment, Sir Peter."

Sir Peter bowed.

"And," continued Fitzgeorge, in a style of great pomposity, which was somewhat affected, for the purpose of imposing on the little baronet, "you must be aware that, when you marry into a family situated as ours is, there are certain difficulties—and—and—you must know—you understand the peculiar situation in which Lady Louisa is placed with respect to the rest of the family. Of course it is not for me to presume to dictate to you Sir Peter, I cannot say that I prohibit all interchange of civilities between you and the Lady Louisa. You must use your own discretion."

Sir Peter was discreet enough to see that he was expected to join the party of husband against wife, as one condition of connecting himself with the family of Fitzgeorge in marriage, therefore he used his own discretion when

he replied, "Believe me, sir, that from all that I hear and know of Lady Louisa, I feel no inclination whatever to cultivate her ladyship's acquaintance."

"You will perhaps think it necessary—but that is altogether as you please—to call and announce your intention of marrying her daughter."

"If that ceremony could be dispensed with, I should not be sorry," replied the little man.

"How far that may be agreeable to your intended bride, I cannot say. I fear that in consequence of early associations, and the artifices of Lady Louisa, she has an injudicious and blind partiality to a parent who is an honour neither to her nor to me. When she leaves my roof she will be under the guardianship of a judicious and enlightened husband, who of course will take all good care that she forms not any improper acquaintance, and that she associates not with those whose conversation cannot enlighten her, and ought not to interest her."

"I should be very sorry," replied Sir Peter Lemon, "to promote enmity in any family, and I think that the safest way to avoid this is, where there is a difference to choose decidedly which part of the family we shall adhere to, and which we shall renounce. On the present occasion there can be no difficulty."

"But," replied Fitzgeorge, "will there be on the part of your wife, that is to be, the same good sense, or a submission to the authority of her husband?"

"I should imagine," replied Sir Peter, "that there will be no great danger that the young lady will oppose the will of her husband and her father too."

The baronet understood that he was expected by Fitzgeorge, not only to avoid all acquaintance with the mother of his wife, but to keep the daughter apart from the mother by the exercise of a husband's authority, and he was ready enough to give intimation that he would do so. But both Fitzgeorge and Sir Peter Lemon, were

quite unaware of the existence of any possible obstacle in the will and determination of the young lady, whose hand and heart were thus summarily disposed of according to the usual fashion of that family. It had been thought quite sufficient on the part of Fitzgeorge to announce to his daughter, that a suitor for her hand was about to appear in the person of Sir Peter Lemon.

The young Louisa heard the announcement with becoming attention and most respectful demeanour, making no reply of rejection or of approbation. Fitzgeorge had by this time, it seems, forgotten his own rebellious opposition to his father in the matter of matrimony, and expected to receive from his daughter an unqualified and unhesitating submission to his will. In due form the baronet was introduced, and with all possible respect he was treated by the young lady. He talked very little about love, thinking, perhaps, the least said the soonest mended; but he talked copiously and

eloquently of his fine estates and his magnificent mansion, praising also the great glories of the mansion of Augustus Fitzgeorge, eulogizing also his marvellous wisdom and surprising grace of manner. Much also did he lament the indisposition of the venerable Lord Fitzgeorge, and much did he admire the supereminent conjugal affection of Lady Fitzgeorge, in that she neglected not her lord in his illness; but not a word came from the lips of the suitor touching Lady Louisa.

Now the young Louisa was by no means deficient in sagacity; she immediately perceived that Sir Peter Lemon was altogether of her father's faction, and that he had been tutored to think disrespectfully of her mother. Her indignation rose at this thought, and she said, "I have also a mother living."

The little baronet was completely posed at the emphasis and energy with which the young lady spoke; he perfectly well knew her meaning, and he could see by the resolute manner

of her utterance, that she had spirit enough to resent any indignity of neglect or insolence which he might be disposed to offer to Lady Louisa. And, notwithstanding that, when not in the young lady's presence, he could talk very fluently of the authority which, as a husband, he would exercise in restraining her from holding intercourse with her mother, he felt himself abashed in her presence, and most sheepishly whispered or muttered some commonplace, that sounded as if they had a meaning, but which, in reality, amounted to nothing. People may speak as disrespectfully as they will of the wisdom of our ancestors, but we are certainly under great obligations to our ancestors, for leaving us as an inheritance a great mass of words, which may be used on any particular occasion, when we have nothing to say for ourselves. Such words as these are particularly valuable in fashionable life, and are almost invaluable in diplomacy and debate. They cannot possibly be remembered against us, and even if they should

be written down and read in our hearing, they are so ghostlike and substanceless, that they cannot excite the slightest blush or remorse. With such words did Sir Peter Lemon reply to the young Louisa, when she thus reproved him for his studied neglect of her mother. But the young lady saw through their hollowness, and having too great a sense of what became herself under the circumstances, she did not angrily or even contemptuously reply, but was silent in the firm resolution, that Sir Peter Lemon should never have her hand or heart. It is the part of true wisdom in the conduct of life, never to be angry with those for whom you have no concern. Sir Peter Lemon was to the young Louisa, as one that was not. She regarded him with no interest and with no emotion either of love or hatred, her resolution was taken and it was immoveable.

But the simple lover, or rather suitor, imagined, as no notice was taken, in the way of

disapprobation, of the shadow of excuse with which he had attempted to varnish over his neglect of Lady Louisa, that the young lady was satisfied with the apology, or at least silenced by the thought of the obedience due to her father. He proceeded, therefore, in his conversation such as it was, for it certainly is not worth repeating, till at length it took that turn which compelled a reply. Some allusion was made by the baronet to the object of his visit; and the allusion was made in so confident a tone as though the only consent required was that of Fitzgeorge.

"Pardon me, Sir Peter," replied Louisa, "in that anticipation you are calculating too hastily."

"Surely I misunderstand you," replied the baronet.

"I cannot answer for your understanding," said the young lady, "but in order to prevent, as far as in me lies, all further misunderstanding,

I will tell you in so many words that my hand is my own, my heart is my own, and that they never can be yours."

"But," said the disappointed suitor, "your honoured father has given me his sanction, his approbation—his word."

"My honoured father," replied the young lady, "may give you, if he will, his sanction, his approbation, his word, they are his to give—but my heart he cannot give, and my hand he shall not give."

"And in what words am I to carry this message to the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge?"

"In mine, if you please; or in yours, if you like them better."

"But I have written home to my friends to announce the pleasing intelligence, that I was about to introduce to them as my bride, the accomplished daughter of the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge."

"Then write again to contradict your first letter, and tell them that you had before written

in too great a hurry. They will, I have no doubt, bear their disappointment with as much fortitude as you can bear yours."

So saying, the young lady laughing, left him; and he, in much bitterness of mortification, made a brief soliloquy, saying, "What a fool I shall look when I go home again."

What is life? The philosopher and the moralist may well ask the question, but who can answer them? The whole human race is looking forward to composure and satisfaction, but such a state of mind or such condition of being, no mortal ever attains. Nothing seems to be right but that which has been a great while ago, and that which is to be a great many years hence. We have seen now in this brief narrative, a delineation of a great portion of the life of the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge, in which it seems, that he has been all along looking forward to some delightful and desirable state of being, which as yet he has not reached; but instead of satisfaction, he has had

perplexity; and instead of calmness, agitation; and even in his gayest and festive moments, he has seen the handwriting on the wall. Here, too, we see his daughter just coming into life; anticipating, no doubt, many pleasures and much prosperity—but it is all anticipation, for what does she enjoy. She is living under the authority of a haughty and cold-hearted father, who would sacrifice her happiness to gratify his own resentment against a wife, whose only offence has been, that she was compelled to marry him. What is life? Is it all perplexity and care? Fitzgeorge seemed to make it so. One generation after another falls we see into trouble, notwithstanding exalted rank, high consideration, and much splendour of decoration and appointment.

Sir Peter Lemon carried back to Fitzgeorge the intelligence that the young lady would not listen to the lover's suit. Fitzgeorge was angry; he felt the indignity which had been offered to his parental authority, and forgetful of the in-

dignities which he had in his time offered to the authority of his parents, he loudly reproved his daughter, who listened in a subdued silence, and then firmly, but meekly, replied, "I have also a mother, whom by the laws of God I am bound to honour, and by the affections of my nature I am compelled to love. She, sir, has watched over my infancy, and she has twined herself around my heart; and I cannot, and will not forget her, or ever give my hand to one who does not honour her."

Fitzgeorge scowled angrily, and his feeble frame, which already felt the effect of premature old age, trembled with an excess of agitation; "Your mother is ——" here he paused, apparently in mercy that would not speak, but really in a malignity that would insinuate more than it dared to say.

The young lady felt the blood mount indignantly into her honest face, and prompted by an inartificial pathos and uncontrollable feeling, she replied, "My mother is—is, sir, what you

have made her—a wretched woman! a neglected, forsaken, heart-broken woman. Parental authority drove her into your arms, and she was made wretched. You would exercise over me the same authority, and would consign me to one from whose home perhaps I might soon be banished, and by whose *friends* I might be soon calumniated."

"Is this language fit and becoming to be addressed to a father," said Fitzgeorge, in a tone of authority. But the daughter was not terrified into cowardice, and she replied, "It is language, sir, that speaks what I feel and what I know. You may not forgive me for uttering it, but I could not forgive myself for withholding it."

"You may have an affection for your mother," replied Fitzgeorge, "but have you no reverence for the authority of a father? Do you know how much you are in my power?"

"There is no power," answered the daughter, "that can subdue the affection which I enter-

tain for my mother, and there is no power that can compel me to give my hand where I cannot give my heart. I know that I am my mother's only defence. If I forsake her I know that the tongues of malignity will move against her, and the sword of persecution will be lifted up. I will not leave her, I will not consent to any arrangement that shall withdraw me from her."

"But know you not," replied Fitzgeorge, "that I have the power to prohibit you from all intercourse with your mother?"

"Exercise that power as far as you may, or as far you dare, 'tis nothing so long as my own will remains unaltered. The law may give you a power, but there is a power above the law, there is a power above the caprice of the proudest noble in the land, and that power is public opinion, against which you cannot and dare not proceed. You may immure me in a dungeon, but the public voice will ask for me, and you must release me. You may for a while keep me under restraint and seclusion, but you

can do comparatively little without my own acquiescence in these arrangements. I might at this moment walk out of the house and seek my mother's roof, and throw myself exclusively under her protection, and you would not dare to bring me back by violence."

Fitzgeorge smiled, though bitterly, and replied, "You are talking with all the impetuosity of inexperienced youth. You know not the world, and you know not yourself. A time may come when you will think more soberly, and judge more discreetly. For the present I will not urge the suit of Sir Peter Lemon, whose character you do not seem to understand or to appreciate, but I hope and trust that you will soon think better of it, and then you will ask his and my pardon for the follies of this day."

"Never, sir," replied the young lady, "never. I may speak with impetuosity, but I do not speak unadvisedly."

"Ah!" exclaimed Fitzgeorge, "have you then been in previous consultation with your

mother? Have you been persuaded by her and corrupted by her arts? Has she been your adviser to refuse the honourable offer now made you, in order that your hand and fortune may be reserved for some lover who will be more subservient to her schemes and stratagems? I think I see the secret now of your refusal of Sir Peter Lemon. He would not be sufficiently subservient to the artifices and devices of Lady Louisa."

"With whom, sir," replied the daughter, "could I better consult than with my mother? Who so likely to give me disinterested and sound advice. She knows by bitter experience the folly and misery of giving a hand where there is not a heart to give. But it is not from her advice alone that I act. I like not Sir Peter Lemon, and will not accept of him."

Fitzgeorge retired from the conference with his daughter, defeated and mortified. If any one wishes to be defeated and mortified, he has nothing to do but to take up the wrong side,

and to take it up in an improper spirit, and he will be sure of defeat and mortification.

"In what a wretched and ridiculous position," said Fitzgeorge to himself, "am I now placed. No sooner am I released from the annoyance of paternal authority, than I am perplexed and troubled by filial disobedience. Instead of finding every thing subservient to my wishes, and every body compliant with my humours, I meet with disappointment every step that I take, and with opposition in every individual that crosses my path. I am now fairly defeated by my own daughter. And what can I do? Can I exercise my paternal authority? I can, but dare I? There is that tremendous power, public opinion, against me. Yet what should I care for the public? What is the public to me? Alas! it is too much. I want from the public applause and admiration. When I shall become Lord Fitzgeorge, and shall have splendid mansions far exceeding all that the world has yet seen, I shall want the

public to admire them. It is public opinion that gives a value to all life's ornaments. A stone dug out of the earth shining brightly, and called a diamond, has in public opinion a value amounting to many thousands of pounds—take away public opinion and it is not worth a straw. Its rarity gives it a value, but it is public opinion that sets value upon rarity itself. I feel that I am not what I was, and that I never can be that which I wished to be. I wish that I could look back into some of my past thoughts a little more minutely, that I might read more distinctly what my hopes have been. I have a general recollection that I have always been looking forward to something better than the present, and yet now I have the impression that I am always looking back on something that is better than the present. In the days that have been I sighed for the coming of those which were to be, and now in those which are I am looking back with regret on those which have been. How is it that in recollection I seem to

have been happy, and yet I cannot recollect the time in which I thought myself happy? Are there any pleasures yet in store for me?"

His eye rested on a flattering portrait which had been drawn of him by an ingenious artist who knew better than any other delineator of the human form divine, how to blend the spirit of flattery with the letter of truth, how to make a handsome picture most strikingly like an unhandsome original, who could, what tailors cannot do, make an old man look young.

"My friends tell me that that portrait is like me. It may be. I wish that I could feel that I was like that portrait. There is in that no trembling hand, no dimness of the eye, no puffed out cheek, no look of any feebleness of body or decay of constitution. And how much better the wig in the picture looks than the wig which I myself now wear. The rascal of a hair-dresser promised me miracles, but he has performed none. How is it that old age creeps upon me more malignantly than it does upon any one

else?—Then there is that perpetual nuisance, my wife. I see no chance of ever getting rid of her. People know that my daughter takes part with my wife, and they almost mention the name of wife in my hearing. I never go into public, but I fancy that people are talking about my wife. She must be guilty, I am sure that she is guilty. Myriads of witnesses may be procured to prove it, but while my daughter is in the way I cannot proceed, and I see no prospect of getting rid of her. The time is now advancing; disguise it as I will I feel that I am growing old. I am old before my time. My father is yet living and I am an old man. People begin to talk of my age and of my corpulence. Oh 'tis disgusting and wretched! but fat as I am, my gracefulness of demeanour is not yet gone. I am still a model of elegance to men younger than myself. I have still some sense of enjoyment left, and if I could but get rid of my wife—I might even now be happy."

CHAPTER VII.

SPITE AND SPLENDOUR.

Old Lord Fitzgeorge continued too ill to have any thing to do with the personal management of his estates, and the lawsuit of which mention has been already made, continued to be carried on under the auspices of Augustus. Not, indeed, that he took any active part in it himself, or gave himself any trouble or concern about it, but he gave his lawyers orders to do the best they could, and he left the management of all things to the steward. He had now got a new steward, a very conceited, dandified young chap, from Ireland, named Castles. This Castles loved mightily to be busy, especially under such a master as Augustus Fitz-

george, who not liking any trouble, left every thing to the care of his steward, who was absolutely vain enough to think that he was master of the estate, because the real master left every thing to his management.

At length, however, after an immense expense, the lawsuit was brought to a close, and the family of Fitzgeorge got the day; but it was found, when the lawyers brought in their bills, that there was so much to pay, that the victory was hardly worth having. Still it would never do to complain, and Fitzgeorge was too lazy to examine the bills, and his steward was too much interested not to pay them in full, because, the more he touched the more stuck to his fingers. The man, against whom the lawsuit principally was directed, was an exceedingly clever fellow, of so much natural shrewdness and penetration, that every body thought that he would certainly get the day. Even Fitzgeorge himself had but little hopes of victory, but as the thing was begun, he

thought it best to go on with it, for his steward told him that there was nothing to be got by giving it up.

The news, therefore, of Fitzgeorge's success, was received with a most obstreperous joy, not only by Fitzgeorge himself, but by almost all the tenants, who had not, indeed, much cause for joy, for they were none the better for it, and had a great deal of the expense to pay out of their own pockets. But the worst of the matter was, that the poor fellow who lost his cause was totally ruined, and had not a shilling in the world left to pay the lawyers, or even to keep himself from the parish. He was not, however, allowed to go to the parish, for Fitzgeorge, at the advice of his Irish steward, Castles, arrested him and sent him to jail, where he lay all the rest of his life in solitude and want.

There were some other noblemen and gentlemen who had been engaged in the lawsuit with Lord Fitzgeorge, and these, when the suit was over, came to pay a visit to Augustus. New

Augustus was, on this occasion, at once gratified and mortified. He was gratified, that he had an opportunity of showing off in grand style before the strangers, but he was greatly mortified on account of his wife, of whom he could give no account that would not tell against himself. Next to the indulgence of his animal appetites, Fitzgeorge enjoyed nothing more than pomp and splendour; and he hoped to surprise his new friends and visitors with a display of elegance and luxury such as they had never before seen, and such as might be a topic for them to discourse and think about as long as they should live. He therefore assembled about him artists and artisans of every description, and because there did not appear to be in his mansion, any one room sufficiently splendid for the purpose of a hall of feasting, he caused one to be immediately added, and that of the most magnificent dimensions and most sumptuous decorations. All his copious and almost boundless stores of gold and silver plate were

brought forth to light, and he was for a while, in the contemplation of these treasures, quite as happy as a child with a new toy:—and what mortal would wish to be happier? He consulted with those of his friends who were best skilled in the arts of cookery and of arranging the decorations of the tables, and he was fully resolved to outdo all the fine doings recorded in Mother Bunch's Fairy Tales.

Poor Lord Fitzgeorge himself was totally unable to see or to be seen by any of these great visitors, but Lady Fitzgeorge had no objection to leave her husband for a little while, to exhibit herself and her finery to them. But all this while the wife of Augustus Fitzgeorge was neglected and forgotten; and when she sent word that as some of the visitors were old acquaintance of hers, and that she should be glad to be permitted to see them, a rude and insulting message was sent to say, that she might stay at home and mind her own business. So there was feasting going forward in the halls of Fitzgeorge,

and there was congratulation on all hands, but Lady Louisa was not allowed to partake of any of the festivities.

Fitzgeorge himself, however, was not quite so happy in the exhibition of his magnificence as he expected to be. There were many drawbacks abating the fulness of his satisfaction. He could see around him gorgeous decorations, persons of exalted rank, men of thought, and men of fancy; he had the satisfaction of receiving from them all the homage of admiration. When he spoke, they were silent and respectfully attentive;—he failed in no effect that he made to shine in conversation, for men who give good dinners are exceedingly witty, and the nearest way to the heart is down the throat. But while he sat in hospitable state and gazed around him with no small share of delight, he had among his thoughts of pride some feelings of humiliation, and among his pleasant emotions some pangs of bitterness and mortification. He was proud of himself, but he was mortified

that he had not a wife of whom he could also be proud, and who would be as much an exhibiter and model of the perfection of female splendour of dress and decoration, as he himself was of the perfection of male attire and manners. There was some pleasure in the thought of his own superb and splendid appearance, but there would have been more in the additional splendour of a well-dressed wife. All, therefore, that Fitzgeorge could say for himself was, that he was as gay as he could be, and that the appearance of his establishment was as brilliant as could be expected, considering that there was no wife to grace it with her graceful presence.

Having so much company in his house, he was in a state of constant publicity, to which, of late, he had been partially a stranger. And though he was very much admired for the general elegance of his manners, he sometimes fancied that he detected a lurking sentiment of disappointment in many to whom he was ex-

posed, and he thought that he heard some whispers concerning his wife. It is a very annoying circumstance in a civilized society, that a man is always under the inspection of the public eye, and amenable to the public tribunal. According to the letter of the law, he may, indeed, do what he will with his own; but there is, in public opinion, a much greater power than that of the written law, which power will punish with its severe and deep-felt rebukes, the transgressions which no written law can reach. The influence of opinion on the human mind and feelings, is one of the most marvellous and mysterious operations of mind. There is a power in opinion which, though silent, is irresistible; and there scarcely ever existed a human being who could brave, or even attempt to brave it. Fitzgeorge, in many actions of his life, seemed to be exceedingly heedless of it; but, in truth, he stood more in awe of it than he himself was aware. He was consulting public opinion even when he was closeted with his tailors, and was

meditating the cut and colour of a coat. He had lived much in the public eye, and had rejoiced greatly in public admiration. He had cared comparatively little for the opinion of the wise and good, but he had been happy in the countenance of the gay and the dissipated, who could laugh arrogantly and sneer superciliously. The power of a laugh is great, and will often hold up a man's conscious firmness for a while, even against public opinion. Fitzgeorge knew, that in many instances, the opinion of the public had been against him, but he could laugh at the antiquated notions of the many-headed monster; and with his gay companions could pleasantly chirp over his cups. Therefore, he was so far happy and brave.

The gaiety of his spirit was now much abated, and he felt that in spite of himself he was growing old, and that nothing could conceal it, and that there was very little to palliate it. Coming forth also on the present occasion a little more into public, and showing himself

a little more to his tenants, he found that he was not in such high repute with them as he had been in times past. They looked upon him without awe, and many of them with disrespect and even reproach. They regarded him as one who had lived only to and for himself, and as one who cared nothing for the rest of the world, except as he might find it an instrument wherewith to gratify his vanity. Some of his guests observed that he was not popular among the tenants, and they observed in particular that frequent mention was made of his wife. This very much astonished them, for they were in the habit of experiencing from their tenants the most marked and profound respect.

One of the party was Lord Alexander, a nobleman who had great estates in the north, and who was altogether one of the craftiest and subtlest of the human race. There was nothing of trickery that he was not equal to; he could play the hypocrite to such perfection that they who were even prepared for his hypocrisy would

be almost deceived by it. Never was there seen a smoother face, and never was there heard a smoother tongue. He pretended to be mightily religious, and he carried an appearance of great meekness; his face was as soft as a cat's paw, and his spirit as malignant as her talons.

"I have heard," said Lord Alexander to Fitzgeorge, "some remarks made about your wife. What is the meaning of all this? If my tenants behaved to me as your father's tenants behave to you, I would crush them."

"The fact is," replied Fitzgeorge, "that I do not like my wife. I was compelled to marry to get rid of my debts, and I very soon was disgusted with the person whom my father had selected for my wife, and I separated myself from her as soon as I could."

"But why did you let the world know of your disgust? Why do you let the world talk about your wife? You might behave with apparent civility to her in public."

"I cannot," replied Fitzgeorge; "I absolutely

hate her; she is quite odious and disgusting to me."

"All that may be," replied Lord Alexander, "and you may indulge in your hatred as much as you please; you may persecute, annoy, and insult her, but you should not let the world see or know any thing of it. By proclaiming your hatred, you put her more effectually out of your power. You would of course be very glad to get a divorce. You have tried once, I believe?"

"I have," said Fitzgeorge, "and a most miserable failure it was. I will, however, take the earliest opportunity of making another attempt."

"But why don't you behave civilly to her? Why don't you keep up appearances in public? You might then put her off her guard, and draw her into some dilemma, and perhaps be able to convince a jury. So long as you keep up a spirit and show of hostility, you defeat your own purpose of vengeance. You make the public sympathize with your wife, and ren-

der them ready to believe that any accusation that may be brought against her is brought at your desire or by your connivance. You show too much temper in your hatred, you are too loud in your devices. You should learn to hate smilingly.

"I am not usually deficient in courtesy," replied Fitzgeorge.

"That is not what I mean. By smiling hatred, I mean that you not merely attend to the common courtesies of life, but demean yourself so that it may seem that the society of the person whom you most dislike is the most agreeable imaginable; you will thus have better opportunity of crushing those whom you hate."

"But it is painful to me," replied Fitzgeorge, "to exercise any of that duplicity; what I hate I hate, whom I detest I detest, and wish them out of my sight. I never willingly expose myself to any annoyances or inconveniences."

"By thus indulging your feelings, however," replied Lord Alexander, "you injure your in-

terest, and you lose many an advantage which you would otherwise gain. If you do not sacrifice the present to the future, you will sacrifice the future to the present. If you do not make your caprices bend to your interest, you will find that your interest is the prey of your caprice. These sound like mere truisms and identical propositions, but there is a great deal of importance in them, and more great than you imagine at first sight."

"I believe you are perfectly right," replied Fitzgeorge; "it has been my system through life to gain all that I could, and to sacrifice nothing present to any thing future. I have always thought it the best policy to take care of the present, for we are sure of that; whereas, if I sacrificed present pleasure in hopes of a future advantage, I might be sure of losing the present pleasure, but not sure of gaining the future advantage."

"A very common system I believe," replied Lord Alexander, "but not the better for being

common. You never can have a command over others, if you have not command over yourself."

Fitzgeorge was perfectly aware of the truth of all that Lord Alexander said, but a conviction of the truth of any system is by no means the invariable prelude to following that system in conduct. Our hero had been too long habituated to a certain system, or more properly speaking, want of system, to be able to make at this period of life any change from conviction. The sight of his wife was odious to him, her very name was discord to his ear. He regarded all allusion to her with a childlike impatience and disgust. But if any thing was suggested, indicating the possibility of getting rid of the matrimonial bond, to that he would listen with as much eagerness as a child would listen to a fairy tale.

CHAPTER VIII.

EMIGRATION.

LADY Louisa now saw that a system of insult, persecution and calumny was pursued against her with the most persevering and merciless severity. Every idle tale that a wicked imagination could invent was sure to be heard with greedy ears, and her enemies, instead of following the rule of believing only half what the world says, reversed that rule and believed twice as much. As now Fitzgeorge was manifestly not far from the enjoyment of the title and estates, the number of his friends considerably increased, and by the same rule the num-

ber of his wife's enemies increased; in fact, the people who called themselves his friends were, in good truth, only so by virtue of their being enemies to and calumniators of his wife. A man of any ordinary humanity, and decent good feeling, would have been ashamed of receiving such homage as this; but Fitzgeorge was ashamed of nothing, so long as it gratified his caprice and indulged his humour.

Without knowing why, and purely from the fact of the great number, who called themselves friends to Fitzgeorge, giving credence and circulation to calumnious stories concerning Lady Louisa, a very great number of persons who knew nothing, and could know nothing, of the circumstances, took it into their heads that all these stories, told and believed by so many respectable persons must be true. But they were not aware of the great abjectness and sycophancy of what are called respectable persons when they come within the influence of nobility. The insulted wife, therefore, could

scarcely make her appearance at all in public, without exciting that attention and notice which was any thing but respectful. Moreover, her daughter was now taken away from her, so that they seldom met, and the opportunities of their meeting were fewer and more restrained than ever. This, together with a variety of other annoying circumstances, induced Lady Louisa to resolve on leaving England, and taking up her abode in a foreign country, where she might be away from the persecutions of her husband, and the insults of his friends.

Fitzgeorge was mightily glad to hear of this resolution, and wished with all his heart and soul to encourage it. But there were some persons who, professing themselves friends to Lady Louisa, were no further friends to her than as they were enemies to him in politics. They were glad to annoy him by means of his wife, and they cared nothing at all for her or for her fate. Politics are sad hardeners of the heart; and as he who is hunting with hounds after

hare or fox, cares not over whose fields he may ride, or through whose fences he may break; so he, who is in pursuit of any political object, cares not whose heart he may break, whose spirits he may depress, whose reputation he may injure or destroy. These persons, then, who were friends to Lady Louisa, by virtue only of their political enmity to Fitzgeorge, made many objections to her ladyship's going abroad, and they represented to her that such a step would give her enemies opportunity of reproaching her more loudly, and of accusing her of going into a foreign country in order that she might lead a life of licentious freedom.

The real fact was, that they were sorry to part with her, because they thereby lost a great means of annoying and perplexing Augustus Fitzgeorge. He indeed was not a little pleased to hear of their objections, for they furthered the object which he had in view; so he took care to have the report abundantly circulated, that the only object which Lady Louisa had in

going abroad was, that she might have an opportunity of living a profligate life unobserved and unreproved. They also said, and a very foolish and insulting saying it was, that she cared nothing for her daughter, but heedlessly left her unprotected and undefended. Alas! poor woman! She had no power to protect or to defend her daughter; rather was her presence made by her enemies the means of annoying and distressing her daughter. Scarcely a day passed in which she had not occasion to weep at the thought of some cruel and insolent interruption of their intercourse.

When one of his sycophants brought him the welcome intelligence that Lady Louisa had resolved to leave England, and to take up her abode in a foreign country, he quite exulted at the information, and said, "I wish she would take up her abode in some other planet. Farthest from me is best. Now our next care must be to prevent her return."

"There will be a difficulty perhaps in that,"

said the informant; "for in case of your coming to the title and estates, she may be disposed to come back and to claim her share of the honours and profits."

"Her share, or at least some share of the profits she shall be welcome to, but I will never allow her any share of the honours. Never, with my good will, shall she be called by the title of Lady Fitzgeorge."

"At all events," replied the sycophant, "one object is gained by this plan of hers; for it has already set some of her friends on talking of the imprudence and impolicy of the step. If they will talk of the imprudence of it, what character may not we give of it?"

"It is all very well," replied Fitzgeorge, "this is exactly as I would have it. I care not how many such friends she may find. Half a dozen indiscreet friends will do her more mischief than a hundred crafty enemies. I believe that they who are not injured by themselves or their friends suffer very little from their

enemies. Now tell me faithfully, what is the general opinion among indifferent persons. Is there any serious belief of her guilt?"

"I can speak only from what I have seen and heard," said Fitzgeorge's friend, "and I must say, that I am really astonished at the numbers who are sincerely persuaded that she is guilty."

"Now I hope you are not deceiving me," said Fitzgeorge; "for really I can hardly think it possible that many, or, at least, any serious number, should be taken in. I am afraid that any one who thinks for a moment, must see how great an interest I have in getting rid of her, and must see also, that multitudes are ready to assist in bringing an accusation against her."

"My good sir," replied the friend, "there are very few people in the world who do think for a minute. Thinking, you know, is not an action, it is a habit. The majority of mankind cannot think, if they would, they do not know

how to set about it. The great multitude has its opinions ready made. You, who have had to do with politics, must of course know this. You know the hollowness of political theories, and the insincerity of political partisans. You know that the great mass of human beings are like inert matter, moved by a small quantity of mind. An extensive and universal habit of thinking, would be the destruction of many of our time-honoured institutions, which have stood the test of ages; for many things may stand the test of ages, which will not stand the test of thought."

"You are right, I believe," said Fitzgeorge, "and I apprehend that nature never designed, that the majority of the human race should think. What an unmanageable thing would be a nation of thinkers! It would be next to impossible to govern it."

"But though," said the sycophant, "there be few that think, there are many that feel, and that can be influenced to take up, and o contend violently for an opinion. Fashion has an

influence where reason could have none; and fashion would, in many cases, overthrow the decisions of reason. Fortunately for you, it happens that fashion is in your favour, and that very naturally, for as the earliest accusation of Lady Louisa was made among people of fashion, a belief of that accusation has naturally, slowly but surely descended, so that every silly scrub that thinks himself just one step above the vulgar, considers it a mark of fashion and gentility to speak accusingly of her ladyship. Keep up your spirits, then, you may even yet gain your object. So long as the influence of fashion is greater than the power of thought, so long you may have hopes."

"Very true," replied Fitzgeorge; "you are to consider though, that in order to gain a divorce, I must procure evidence of transgression. Now, how can I procure evidence from so great a distance as France, Italy, Germany, or wherever her ladyship may choose to have a fancy to ramble?"

"Easily."

"Easily? Be kind enough to explain, for to me it does not appear so easy a matter. When she was living here we knew who were her neighbours, and we knew where to apply for the purpose of information; but abroad, she will be moving from place to place, and there is no one in those countries who will have any interest in making up a story for me."

"Send people over to watch, to buy evidence, it may be had very cheap on some parts of the continent. On my word, I think you have now the best chance that you have ever yet had of making out a case against her."

"I wish I could think so," replied Fitzgeorge; "but I must confess, that I am by no means clear, that the task is so easy as you seem to imagine. If I send people over on purpose to watch, it may be, and no doubt will be supposed, that I send them out to fabricate stories, or to purchase evidence. Besides, will it not appear gratuitous and gross, if when she should be on the continent, and away from the

individual with whom she was supposed to be too familiar here, we should bring an accusation against her for other amours? Shall we not be carrying the accusation too far, so as to defeat our own object?"

"Here, again, you are talking, as though the multitude thought. They do not think. Moreover, they love wonders; and if you should accuse her ladyship of the most extravagant or outrageous offences, you would be sure to find some that would believe the accusation. As for any charge against you of sending people out on purpose to fabricate stories, that is an objection easily surmounted. There are many travellers from England on the continent of Europe: these travellers are either people of fashion, or people that think themselves such, which is better still; they will naturally fall into the same line as that in which her ladyship may be travelling, and they will frequently be in the same town where she is residing. They will, of course, talk about her to the na-

tives, and will most probably speak but lightly of her. Foreigners are exceedingly polite and complaisant, and they will never think of contradicting *milord Anglais*. The traveller will ask what society her ladyship frequents, and as there is society in Italy, not of the very highest repute, into which it is possible that a stranger may by some accident fall, you will then have a very pretty nucleus of accusation to begin with;—the traveller has nothing to do when he returns or writes to England, but to say that he happened to be in the same town where Lady Louisa was, or had been residing; and that when mention was made of her name, it appeared that the society to which she was principally attached, and in which she seemed most interested, was of a particular nature, that shall be nameless."

"Ay," said Fitzgeorge, "very good indeed. Methinks I marvellously admire her plan of emigration. 'Tis by far the best step she could possibly take.—But, on second thoughts, how

shall we ensure her falling into society of the description that you name? There is, certainly, much of it in Italy, and she may have some difficulty to avoid it; but may she not be on her guard?"

"This," replied the sycophant, "is already provided for: she goes out under the brand of unfashionable. All self-called fashionables, will avoid her company; all fashionable English travellers will avoid recognising her and make it a matter of religion, as they value their places in society here, to avoid her company abroad. The inhabitants will do the same. She will, therefore, be driven into society of a certain description; for society, you know, she must and will have."

"So far, so good," replied Fitzgeorge; "but here is not yet enough to make materials for a divorce."

"Perhaps not; but it is an admirable beginning, and a very promising foundation. You will soon have, in England, a general talk, that

Lady Louisa's conduct on the continent is such, that she is not admitted into any good society. Then follows, very naturally and easily, some particular accusation. You see now the great value of general surmise. Even the Simkin plot, clumsily as it was concocted, has been not without its uses. So far from having brought any reproach on you, as you once feared that it might do, it has been the means of fixing the first stigma on her, which never will be removed. Your present task is all the easier, in consequence of the accusation of the Simkins. They could not substantiate the charge, but they have done you good service; for the opinion now is, that there was some truth in the charge, but merely a defect in the evidence; the world, or at least the fashionable world, which is all the world that you know any thing of, takes it for granted, that there was plenty of moral, but no legal evidence."

"This is all very fortunate and agreeable; but I must acknowledge," said Fitzgeorge,

"that it appears to me marvellously strange, that considering how very convenient and agreeable to me such an accusation was, no one should suppose that I was, in some degree, party to the accusation."

"I tell you again, my dear sir, the world does not think. As for the fashionable world, it not only cannot think, but it dares not think. And should there be a few individuals here and there who see the whole true state of the case, they can do you no harm, they cannot convince the many; for thinking is as necessary for the reception as it is for the discovery of truth."

"You reason well, my friend," replied Fitzgeorge; "yet there is another matter to be considered: that is, the person on whom suspicion and charge must fall."

"In that," replied the friend, "there will be no difficulty."

"We must not make an accusation of general profligacy, but must fix on some individual, and do our utmost to gain the means of proving

some one individual charge. Now suppose, for it is a supposable case, that she should form no acquaintance with any gentleman whatever."

"Well, suppose that, still there is no difficulty, for she must have men-servants."

"But will it ever answer, to accuse her of an amour with a menial servant?"

"Not, perhaps, altogether with a menial servant; but, travelling about on the continent, and having no male relative, she must of course be under the necessity of treating some upper male-servant with more familiarity, than when residing in a settled habitation, and receiving company of various descriptions. I see, indeed, no difficulty; your path is as plain as day. You are now, without doubt, in the way of the accomplishment of your wishes. Throw no obstacle in the way of her departure; let her go as soon as she will, let her go where she will, and when travellers who happen to hear any thing of her in their journey, return to England, they will be ready enough to give you all the

information in their power, or at least they will let the world know. Then, when every body begins to talk about the manners and the notoriously ill-conduct of Lady Louisa, you will, of course, be perfectly justified in sending some persons as—as—spies—if you like to call them so—who will procure evidence, and gain all the information that may be needful to procure a divorce."

"Your scheme is very good and very plausible; but if I send any one out for the purpose of investigation, I ought to send out respectable men."

"It would certainly be better to send out respectable men if you can find them; but if not, why you may easily procure a briefless barrister or two, or some half-pay captain, who are gentlemen by virtue of their profession, if by nothing else."

"Yet, to consider the matter in all its bearings, would it be altogether correct to send out spies to watch her conduct, if we have already

information, that it is such as would vindicate suing for a divorce? Would it not be thought sufficient to procure the attendance of the witnesses, without sending out any spies to make discoveries? The sending out spies, looks as if we were desirous of making what we are unable to find."

"Oh no, not at all. The world will understand that you have heard some rumours, and that you are exceedingly sorry, and that you can scarcely credit the reports; but as they are so very numerous, and so remarkably unanimous, you are under a necessity of investigating the matter, by means of some respectable and intelligent gentlemen, who will make inquiries on the spot."

"Well, that seems plausible enough," replied Fitzgeorge, "and I only hope that the scheme may answer, but I cannot help having my fears."

When he was alone, he said to himself, "It is pleasant enough to have a hope of getting

rid of an encumbrance, but it is a miserable consideration to think that I have lived all these years in the world, and that now my greatest happiness would be to get rid of my wife. I have heard some persons affecting philosophical discrimination say, that there are no positive pleasures, but that our only happiness is getting rid of our annoyances. Truly this is a most humbling picture of human life, and yet, perhaps, it may be true. I have, in my own thoughts of the past, a recollection, that I never enjoyed any period or incident of life, so much as the first days of my deliverance from the thraldom of minority, and my first assumption of the liberty of adult age; and I can scarcely now imagine any thing that would please me more, than to be exonerated from this burden of matrimony.—How can men be so absurd, as to make laws which bind themselves for life!"

CHAPTER IX.

A DAUGHTER'S MARRIAGE.

VERY few persons in the rank of life in which the daughter of Fitzgeorge was placed, have the boldness or the fortune to have a husband of their own choice and approbation. We have seen that the young Louisa had acted with a mighty spirit of independence in refusing the hand of Sir Peter Lemon. This is generally considered the utmost that such children of fashion and rank can do in the way of liberty, to refuse a dictated match; but the daughter of Fitzgeorge went further; she not only refused

to accept Sir Peter Lemon, but she positively declared herself to have formed an attachment to another, and she was as firm in persisting to accept of him she loved, as to refuse him she loved not. There had come in the train of those noblemen and gentlemen who visited her father on the completion of the great lawsuit, a young gentleman of prepossessing manners, and of most agreeable address, who had been employed in some slight way in the course of this long and tedious litigation. He, however, now that the contest was over, had no particular employment, and his visit was not matter of business, but he came with Lord Alexander and the others as a kind of companion of their journey, rather than as partaker of their visit. So being a man of leisure, he had opportunity of talking to, and ingratiating himself with the young lady, while the rest of the party were discussing matters of business with her father; for though the lawsuit was over, there was a great deal of business to be settled among the

parties who had gained the cause. With all this arrangement and settlement, however, the young gentleman here alluded to had nothing to do; nor indeed had the young lady.

As therefore these two were at leisure, and had only to talk to and amuse one another, there sprung up something of an attachment between them. The young gentleman, though of good family, was not in possession, or in expectation, of any great fortune; he therefore might have been very probably attracted by the reputation of the young Louisa's great expectations. But whatever might have been the attraction either to him or to her, it is a certain fact that an attachment sprung up between them, and he had made her an offer of his hand, and she had expressed her willingness to accept the offer, even before her father knew any thing of the matter.

One day, therefore, when Fitzgeorge was expostulating with his daughter on her obstinacy in refusing the hand of Sir Peter Lemon, she replied, "I refused him, sir, for the best of all

possible reasons, that I did not like him; and not only do I dislike him, but I have an attachment to another, I have received an offer from another, I have promised my hand to another."

Fitzgeorge started with astonishment, and was taken altogether by surprise at this bold and abrupt declaration. "You have promised your hand to another!" said he, as soon as he could recover calmness enough to speak. "Do you really mean what you say, or are you endeavouring to make trial of my patience and forbearance?

"I really mean what I say," replied the young Louisa; "I have accepted his offer, and with or without your sanction my hand shall be his."

"Well," replied Fitzgeorge, "I believe that this is the first time that any individual in our family ever took such a liberty."

"It is then," said the young lady, "high time that they should begin to take such liberty. I was born in a land of liberty, and I have

heard from all the family, and from all the friends of the family, that there is not in the wide world such another land for real liberty as England; now I cannot think that there can be much liberty enjoyed by one who is not permitted to accept or refuse an offer of marriage."

"But the authority of a parent," said Fitzgeorge, who could, when the occasion required it, talk as gravely and authoritatively as his father had been habituated to talk; "the authority of a parent is not inconsistent with liberty."

"A want of freedom," said the young lady, "is to my notion exceedingly inconsistent with liberty. Indeed there is scarcely a single point in which liberty is more valuable, or restraint more galling than in the choice of a partner for life."

"But surely, child," replied Fitzgeorge, still gravely, and in a most didactic tone, "you will not presume to say that, in your notions of liberty, you would cast off all parental restraint

and government! Whence can you have learned such ideas, that a parent has no authority over a child, because we live in a land of liberty?"

"Sir," said the daughter meekly, "I never intended to question the authority of a parent over a child; but the choice of a partner for life is no part of the authority over the *child*, for we are not children as long as we live. During the period that the law calls infancy, or childhood, you have authority; but if you dictate to me who shall be my husband, I am made subject to your parental authority for life. I am content, sir, if it be your will, not to marry till I am of age, but I must be positive in using then the freedom to which I am born."

Here was another topic of reflection and meditation to Fitzgeorge, a topic not by any means agreeable, for it was only another corroboration of the intractableness of life's events. "Still," said he to himself, "I am going on in the same track as ever, looking to have every thing according to my own fancy, and finding myself

disappointed in almost every instance. In my childhood I was subjected to capricious restraints; when I came of age I was presently involved in difficulties, from which even yet I am scarcely extricated. I have been driven into marriage with one for whom I never had and never could have the slightest affection or regard; and now, after having been annoyed and tormented by my father and my wife, I am opposed and thwarted by my own child. I know the obstinacy of her disposition, that I must ultimately yield; and the more I oppose her, the more ridiculous I shall look when at last I am subdued. Then, again, I greatly fear that this marriage of hers, if it should take place, and I do not see how I can prevent it, will interfere with my schemes for getting rid of my wife; this child is still attached to her mother, and of course her husband will be of the same faction. Soon, perhaps, I shall be a grandfather, and my wife will be a grandmother; and what a ridiculous figure shall I

make in the eyes of the world—a grandfather accusing a grandmother of wanton and licentious conduct!"

Fitzgeorge was too indolent to be much of a plotter. If his father had been concerned in the present matter, he would have woven every web of sophistry or plot to bring things about after his own mind; but Augustus could merely express his angry authority and impatience, and at last be thwarted by his child. He could not even plot against his wife with any degree of tact and skill, and he left to others to manœuvre for him, and they were totally unable to accomplish that which they undertook. It was rather late in life to be learning lessons; but Fitzgeorge, advanced as he was in life, was too young yet to learn one lesson that had been inculcated on him year after year and day after day, through the whole course of his being; that lesson was, that no man comes into the world with happiness ready made for him, but that he must make it for himself of such mate-

rials as nature furnishes him withal. Many persons imagine that with such advantages of rank, fortune, person and accomplishments as Augustus Fitzgeorge possessed, they must be happy: perhaps they might be, but with such conduct as his they certainly could not be, nor can any human being in any condition enjoy his life by the mere reception of impulses and impressions; whatever happiness he enjoys as a rational and intelligent being, must be through the medium of reason and intelligence.

A gentleman who is between fifty and sixty years of age, and somewhat corpulent, who has lived a life of luxury and self-indulgence, not having cultivated the powers of the mind, nor having denied himself any gratification that his appetites have desired, is not, one should imagine, in a condition to form very sanguine hopes of a bright and glorious sunset of life, or to anticipate much unmingled joy and prosperity. Fitzgeorge, however, had lived so long by the stimulus of hope, that he could not now live

without it; and as each one of his hopes failed him one after the other, he readily, by means of a yet active imagination, contrived to supply himself with more. It was not at all consistent with his schemes, that his daughter should marry this gentleman on whom her affections were fixed; for by so doing she would be not only less under the influence of her father, but more able to patronize and defend her mother. So that by this step, Fitzgeorge saw one fresh obstacle to obtaining a divorce. He consulted with his friends concerning the proposed marriage of his daughter; for so very feeble was he in resolve, that he could do nothing without the aid of counsellors. His friends were decidedly of opinion that the step would tend to embarrass him in his attempts to obtain a divorce from his wife; and yet they thought that as the young lady was of great obstinacy or firmness of mind, there would be nothing gained by a loud and violent opposition, save a publication of his defeat. For though defeat itself be mortifying,

yet to such a man as Augustus Fitzgeorge, the publication of the defeat would be more mortifying still.

So after due deliberation, the consent of the Hon. Augustus Fitzgeorge was given to his daughter's marriage; and the tenants, who seemed to think that they could never have too many of these great folks to support, began rejoicing at the marriage with just such intemperate noise as they rejoiced at the marriage of Augustus himself in days past. They talked as though they imagined that the existence of great folks was the greatest blessing that earth could witness or heaven could give. Fitzgeorge himself remembered his own marriage, and all the festivities and congratulations which had attended that, and now he had to undergo congratulations on his daughter's marriage; and he accepted the congratulations with a marvellously fine external grace, but with an inward bitter repugnance. What a mass of formality is human life, especially civilized life, and most

especially of all the highest walks of civilized life. People talk about the necessitous classes, but there is no class more necessitous than the highest, no people on the face of the earth so much under the dominion of the word *must*, as the fashionable world. The *must* that nails a merchant to his desk, that plants a shopkeeper behind his counter, that ties the mechanic to his board or his loom, and drives the negro to his whip-thanked toil, is not so strong by one-half as the *must* that regulates every movement in the life of a person of high fashion. Under the domineering influence of this *must*, Fitzgeorge seemed highly delighted with his daughter's marriage, highly honoured with the congratulations of his friends, some of whom almost laughed at his misery while they were congratulating him on this addition to his happiness. But he must receive their congratulations, he must return them smile for smile and bow for bow; he must receive his son-in-law with great cordiality, he must provide for the

settlement and establishment of his daughter. Yet this man, who was thus under the dominion of *must*, looked upon himself as something vastly superior to the ordinary race of mortals, more privileged and more free.—Bah!

CHAPTER X.

ARCHITECTURE.

WHAT might have been the sequel to the congratulated marriage of the young Louisa, and what the sorrows waiting for her in the path of life, must rest unknown. From all earthly joy and sorrow, from all temporal prosperity and adversity, from all worldly friends and enemies she was withdrawn by the hand of death. Happier are they who die to be pitied, than they who live to be pitied.

Now the studious and careful pursuer of happiness, gaiety, honour and good repute, was in a state of comparative solitude, and nearly in-

dependent. His father, who had ruled him with a harsh and iron despotism, was now totally incapable of attending to any business, and was as helpless as a new-born child. His wife was far away on the continent, and his only child was in the grave. There might have been an opportunity now, and perhaps to some minds under these circumstances there would have been an opportunity, for the sobriety of thought and the steadiness of moral reflection leading to and terminating in a renovation and reformation of life. But the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge preferred a new house to a new life, and for the diversion of his grief, and the promotion of his rational happiness, he gave himself to serious meditation on topics of architecture. This had been from his earliest days a favourite study with him, and it has been quaintly said of him, with reference to his architectural career, that he began life with building castles in the air, and that he finished it by building mansions in the mud.

The purse of Lord Fitzgeorge being now more at the command of Augustus; almost, indeed, as much as if it had been his own, he resolved to enjoy himself to his heart's content, if possible, in constructing some superb mansion with which he might be proud to identify his own magnificent self. Architects came around him, trying if they could do for his mind that which the tailors had done for his body; that is, to fit it to a nicety. Fitzgeorge was not the best calculator in the world in any sense; he knew that his architectural desires were boundless, and it appeared as though he imagined that the wealth of Lord Fitzgeorge was boundless too. What strange notions some people do get into their heads with respect to property, seeming to imagine that small incomes require a great deal of management, and that large incomes require none: just as though it were easier to navigate a man of war than to row a skiff. The truth is, that he who has

little knows what he has, and that he who has much, does not know what he wants.

Committees and councils of taste were assembled, and many were the learned discussions on Gothic, Grecian, Italian, Egyptian, and Chinese architecture. There were already several mansions, the property of Lord Fitzgeorge, and presently likely to become the property of Augustus, besides those which were his own exclusively and independently. So it was a matter of doubt and debate whether a new one should be built, or whether some extensive and important alterations should be made in the old ones, or in any one of them.

Perhaps Fitzgeorge was never more happy than when thinking how happy he should be when some ingenious and splendid architectural design should be put into actual brick and mortar, gilding and stucco. Blessed be the memory of the man who invented pap fronts for palaces, and made brick walls look like stone for ten minutes or thereabouts, by means

of plaster, paste, pap, or some such marvellous succedaneum! Say what we will respecting the trowel style, it has given many a throb of delight to the bosom of Augustus Fitzgeorge. He has spent some of his happiest hours in looking over the well-drawn designs of buildings, some of which might one day or other be his. Say that by the time that the mansion might be completed, that Fitzgeorge might be nearly ready for a mansion that knows no feast save that of the worms. What then? Is that any reason that it should not be built? Certainly not. The eating of a hare is not such good sport as the catching of it, and the possession of a fox is not so pleasant as the riding after it. Fitzgeorge thought that his happiness would be in dwelling in a house constructed according to his own taste; but the fact is, that his happiness was in thinking what his happiness would be.

While Fitzgeorge and his friends, assisted by divers dexterous artists, were meditating on the various devices which had been submitted as

eligible, more eligible or most eligible, the venerable Lady Fitzgeorge died and left a mansion at her son's disposal. The artists were all delighted—not at the death of Lady Fitzgeorge, for they did not care enough about her to be glad or sorry;—but they were all delighted at the fine capabilities which the mansion in question possessed for improvement and enlargement, and for becoming, under proper management, and at comparatively little expense, a dwelling worthy of so great a man as Augustus Fitzgeorge. By some covenant or other in their leases, the tenants were under an obligation to keep in proper repair certain mansions on the estate, and this was one of them.

"Now," said one of the architectural artists, "now is the time for you to jockey your tenants, and to make them build you a handsome mansion."

"You know," said Fitzgeorge, "that their leases bind them only to repair, not to rebuild."

"Very true," said the architect, "but what

is the meaning of the word *repair*? They are bound to make all suitable repairs, and the decision of what are suitable repairs rests with architects and persons skilful in building, who may be employed by Lord Fitzgeorge or his representatives. An enlargement of a house is a kind of repair contemplated in the covenant of the lease, and that in several instances has been done, therefore the law will bear you out in that by virtue of precedent. Now if you may add one room, you may add two or two hundred, and may make them as large as you please. You have nothing to do but to take care that you leave some part of the old house standing, so that it is not a total rebuilding, and then you are perfectly safe, and may go to any extent you will."

"I like your notions," said Fitzgeorge, "and I shall be glad to see them acted upon; only you know, before we begin, it is generally the custom to consult a committee of the tenants, to know whether it may be quite convenient for

them just at the present time, to undergo so large an expense as will be necessary to make all these repairs we contemplate. Of course you will lay the plan before them, and let them see how much we intend to improve the estate and the appearance of it, by architectural embellishment."

"Oho," said the architect, "we must not let them into all the secret at once; for if we do, they will begin to grumble, and though grumbling may do them no good it may do you harm, and ultimately injure the estate."

"I think," said Fitzgeorge, "the estate is more trouble than it is worth. What a nuisance it is that we cannot build, buy, and live as one likes, without all this trouble!"

"Never mind that," said the architect, "only let me have the profits of the job, I will take care that you shall have as superb a mansion as any nobleman needs wish to live in. All the world admires your taste in architecture."

It is scarcely necessary, perhaps, for the pur-

pose of information to the reader to observe here, that the artist in question was rather disposed to pay compliments to his employer at the expense of sincerity and truth. The artist did not think highly of the taste of Fitzgeorge, but rather among his own clerks and draughtsmen used to make himself merry, with what he called the freaks of Fitzgeorge's fancy. Fitzgeorge had, in fact, no more taste than this: that he was passionately fond of any thing remarkably fine and showy. The mansion in which he had resided for some years, and to which he made many additions, and to which he was desirous of making many more, had been altered and re-altered, over and over again. It was to this mansion that he built the additional dining-room, on occasion of the visit of Lord Alexander and his friends. By the way, this Lord Alexander, it has been said, laughed at Fitzgeorge, for his gaudy taste; and said, that it was a great pity that he had not been brought up for a showman; and added, rather sarcasti-

cally, that he would never make a complete showman, for he was no conjuror; and the proper showman ought to be something of a conjuror. Besides this, he had several other mansions, especially one near the sea-side, which was built at a most enormous expense; and which was so exceedingly ludicrous in its form and decorations, that had not Fitzgeorge been a person of high fashion and of considerable influence, he would have been laughed at aloud for the outrageous absurdity of it. It really seemed as if he had tried his utmost to make something that should outdo in absurdity every thing that had ever stood upon the ground before. If we were to describe it either with pen or pencil, the reader would not believe it. There was also belonging to the Fitzgeorge family a large lumbering old mansion, built nobody knows when; and which, by various and repeated additions had increased in size, till it was far too large for any comfortable occupation: now it was the fancy of Fitzgeorge

to have this place put into repair as he called it, and a pretty extensive repair he made of it. His passion for finery, indeed, lasted all his life long, in one form or another; but it was remarkable, that his taste for building was strongest in his latter days. Perhaps, however, the passion was not stronger, but had merely a greater opportunity of gratification; inasmuch as it was not till towards his latter days, that he possessed the means of giving full indulgence to it. In his earlier days he had no small ambition that way, but it was checked by the want of means. And as he had been all his life long anticipating the possession of the estate, now that he came to have the management of it, he seemed fully determined to give way to his fancy for building.

At a meeting of some of the tenants, the subject was ingeniously started by the steward, in whom the management of all these matters was vested, and he said, "Gentlemen, I suppose you are all of you pretty well aware that

by our leases, we are under an obligation to see our landlord comfortably and decently lodged. Now there are to be sure several mansions, as they are called, on the estate; but there is not one that is at all fit for the comfortable residence of our worthy landlord. Poor old Lord Fitzgeorge you know is now superannuated, and he takes no interest in such matters, and as the young Augustus" (*here some of the tenants smiled*) "has kindly condescended to undertake the management of affairs for his father, it is but fair that he should be treated with all due respect, and certainly we ought not to hesitate at letting him have the means of building himself some comfortable and handsome mansion, such as may be comfortable to him, and reputable, I may say, to ourselves; for all good tenants ought to be proud to see their landlords well lodged."

A great deal of applause followed this opening address of the steward, and the whole party seemed ready to give an unlimited order to

have such a mansion erected, as might be worthy the dignity of him who was worthy the dignity of being their landlord. This dignity, it seems, is a marvellously expensive kind of article; and one cannot help remarking by the way, what equivocal ideas of dignity persons seem to entertain; for, by means of a curious kind of sympathy, we make another's finery or tawdriness the means of our own dignity. The French people in the last century, though oppressed and plundered by their kings and nobles, were yet proud of the palaces and pomp which their kings enjoyed; and they would have felt their own pride touched by any diminution of the royal splendour. And, very likely, to come down to more modern days and more familiar things, many of the good citizens of London would be very sorry to see the Lord Mayor's coach shorn of its brightness. They would more readily deprive themselves of some physical enjoyments than lose the gratification of their civic vanity, by the absence of that

large, lumbering piece of finery. It is, in fact, by considering kings, landlords, and lord mayors, our own, in some mystical roundabout manner, that leads us to undergo almost any expense, for the purpose of decorating these animals.

Fitzgeorge's steward was a crafty fellow, and he understood this passion or propensity in the human species, and made the most of it, by getting a good job for the architect, who was a friend of his, and by procuring for his master a handsome house to live in.

Some of the tenants, however, had begun to find out, that though dignity was a pretty thing enough to talk about, and all very well when people had got enough to eat, drink, and clothe themselves withal, yet it was sometimes bought for more than it was worth; they therefore were not quite so soon carried away by the steward's palaver, and one of them, who acted as spokesman for the rest, said, "That is all very pretty talk of yours, Mr. Steward; but I must con-

fess, that if I must be proud at all, I would rather be proud of myself than of my landlord. I don't see that a landlord's fine house can feed or clothe my family. Indeed, I think our landlord has houses enough already, far more than he can possibly live in. He is a fine fat fellow, no doubt—I mean the young one, as you call him, our deputy landlord as is; yet I think the houses that he has already are big enough to hold him. Now, at his time of life, for he is not a very young man, notwithstanding all your blarney, I think he might be better employed than in building new houses. But I suppose you and he have been laying your heads together, just for the sake of giving a job to Tom Clarke, the builder and carpenter."

A very few of the tenants laughed heartily at these blunt remarks, but the steward was very angry, and so were most of those who called themselves the steward's friends, and they cried out *shame*. The steward, however, could command his temper when any thing was to be got

by it, and knowing that he was going to bamboozle the tenants for the sake of pleasing his master, Augustus Fitzgeorge, and for the purpose of giving a job to Tom Clarke, the carpenter, he smilingly replied, "The tenants, of course, have a right to express their opinions on the subject, and to determine to what extent any repairs in any of the mansions shall be carried; yet, sir, I can't help saying, that it is not very handsome of you to be making rude remarks on our young landlord's corpulency. I am of opinion that you do not know much about the matter; for I can assure you, on the word of a gentleman, that the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge is not near so fat as he was, and that he never was so fat as some malicious people have represented him. Have you never seen the picture of him drawn by Larry Thomas, the sign-painter? If you have, I am sure you must acknowledge that he is a very good-looking, well-proportioned man; and that picture is said, by good judges, to be a most excellent likeness."

"Is it more like than the orginal?" asked one of the tenants.

"Yes," replied the steward; and the whole party, except some of the steward's particular friends, burst out into a hearty laugh. The steward, who was rather a dull man, did not know what they were laughing at, and he gravely went on with his speech, saying, "But however, be that as it may, that's neither here nor there, and nothing to the purpose; but we are bound by our leases to provide for the proper and suitable repair of the mansions on the estate; and I am sure I am the last man in the world to think of running the tenants to any unnecessary expense. As for Tom Clarke, I believe he is as honest and clever a fellow as ever put brick and timber together, and I don't want Tom to have the job, except that if he will do it more reasonably than any one else, I think ought to have it. But I have got the whole calculation made out most completely and accurately, even to a shilling. The house that

old Lady Fitzgeorge used to live in, is now absolutely out of repair, and we have been thinking, that by laying out a few pounds upon that, we may have a mansion for our landlord to live in, that neither he nor we need to be ashamed of."

Having said this, the steward produced Tom Clarke's estimate for repairing the old house, and made it appear so plausible, that the tenants were easily prevailed upon to consent to the plan, and they gave the steward commission to see that it was done properly. And one or two of those who at first grumbled at it, when they saw how very little it was likely to cost, and how very easily Augustus would be satisfied, were ready enough to let the steward have his own way, and they told him that they did not wish to behave unhandsomely to their landlord, but that they were desirous that every thing should be done properly, only at the same time they could not help saying, that as times were very bad just now, and that as

scarcely any money was stirring just at this particular time, they hoped that due consideration would be taken, and that no more would be spent than was absolutely necessary.

"Oh, most certainly!" replied the steward; "nobody can be more considerate of his tenants than Augustus Fitzgeorge is. He will never, I am sure, ask for any thing that is unreasonable, and he will be always ready to deny himself any indulgence for the sake of the tenants. In that respect he is as good as his father."

Having got the consent of the tenants that the old house should be put into repair, the steward hastily, and full of glee, went to Fitzgeorge and said, "Now, sir, we have gained the point for you, and not with any particular limitation of expense. Only, you know, you must be as reasonable as you can, or you will get me into disgrace."

"Trust me for that," replied Fitzgeorge; "and now send Clarke to me with his plans, and I will give him his orders."

"What a goose," said Fitzgeorge to himself, "is that steward of ours! What do I care about his getting into disgrace, so as I get into a handsome house. This is just the thing that I wanted, to have the arrangement of a mansion after my own taste and judgment; and now I will let the world see what taste I really have. There is not one man in a thousand that has any real taste in architecture. I will immortalize my name by architectural magnificence. I have done something for tailors, now I will do something for architects."

The bricklayers and carpenters, and all other artists who were concerned in building, were presently set to work, and Tom Clarke was as busy as a bee, and as happy as a fiddler. Some of the tenants, however, just now and then cast their eyes upon the work, and they could not help thinking that there were symptoms of much more extensive repairs than they had calculated upon. They thought, that if these were only repairs that were going on, they were very

sweeping repairs indeed, for there seemed to be nothing at all left of the old house—scarcely a stick or a stone. So they mentioned it to the steward next time they met, and said, "I am afraid that Tom Clarke will have a swinging long bill against us for repairs."

"Oh dear no," said the steward very good-humouredly, "you need not be afraid, I assure you. Tom Clarke is as honest a fellow as ever lived; and as for my young master there is not a more amiable and reasonable creature living on the face of the earth. I have a very high opinion of old Lord Fitzgeorge, but I do think that his son in some points outdoes his father, and I have no doubt that he will prove to be the best of landlords."

That sort of talk, for he said a great deal more than any body could have patience to read, pleased and quieted some of the tenants; but there was one sharp and shrewd fellow there, who knew as well as any man living the difference between sixpence and a shilling, and he

said, "I tell you what, Mr. Steward, you may talk as much blarney to the tenants as you please about Tom Clarke's honesty, and your young master's reasonableness—by the way, I wonder how you can call him young; yet I can tell you that I have been examining the works going on at the house where the old lady lived, and that the job cannot be completed for less than ten times the sum that was stated in the estimate. It is a downright shame and a piece of cheatery that ought to be exposed and reprobated."

The steward knew all that as well as any body could tell him, and therefore he would not put himself in a passion, but endeavoured to throw dust in the eyes of the tenants, and instead of saying any thing about the estimates or the expense, he launched out into a long lachrymose lamentation on the great sin of calling Fitzgeorge old when he was to all intents and purposes a young man.

The next time that the steward had an in-

terview with Fitzgeorge, he said to him, "I beg pardon, sir, for taking such a liberty, but really the truth is I shall not know what to say to the tenants, if you go on at this extravagant rate. They throw all the blame on me, and I have to tell all manner of lies, and invent all manner of shuffling excuses, to keep the blame off from you. Positively you must manage things a little more decently."

"Ah, you are a clever fellow," replied Fitzgeorge, "I shall leave all these matters to you. You know how to manage these turbulent tenants."

"But the management of so large an estate," said the steward, "is actually a difficult matter."

"I know it, my dear fellow," answered Fitzgeorge; "it is so difficult a matter that I should not think of ever attempting it. I leave it all to you; and you have only to see that you are well paid for your trouble, and that there is wherewithal to supply my daily outgoings. You may do just as you will with the estate;

you may let the farms to any body you may like, you may get what rents you can for them; you may pull down what houses or barns you will, or you may build when, what, and where you please; you may cut down whatever timber you want, and sell it; you may raise any money by mortgage—in a word, you may do whatever you think fit with the estate, supplying yourself and your friends, only let me have as much money as I want, and as little trouble as possible."

"Why, sir," replied the steward, "nothing can be more reasonable than that, I must allow; yet with every feeling of respect I must be permitted to say, that if you will indulge your taste for expense so very much, you might spend upon yourself the whole proceeds of the estate, leaving your tenants nothing to live upon."

"My good man," replied Fitzgeorge, "you talk very reasonably, and the tenants are no doubt much obliged to you; but what are the tenants to me, except as the means of supplying me with money? And if I should happen to

squeeze them dry, they must exert their wits to produce more money. If you rob the bees of their honey, you know that they will make more: nothing so good to make the tenants industrious as keeping them poor. I, you know, as a landlord, or rather son of a landlord, and deputy landlord, cannot possibly work. Some of our predecessors remembered the good old times when it was the common sentiment that the only use of tenants was to work for their landlords."

"A very good and pious sentiment no doubt," replied the steward, "and I can assure you that I do all that is in my power to bring the tenants back to that pleasant notion, but I positively cannot. Instead of being convinced by my arguments, they laugh at me."

"Well, my dear fellow," replied Fitzgeorge, "only get me money, and they may laugh at you, or you may laugh at them, just as it pleases you. I must have money, and I must have a mansion; and if you cannot manage the

matter for me, I must get another steward that can, that's all." So saying, the Honourable Augustus Fitzgeorge gave his steward a slap on the back, and dismissed him.

Away went the man, muttering as he went, "What a strange fellow is this Augustus Fitzgeorge! What can I do with him, and what can I do without him? I must not put myself out of place; yet positively I know not how to keep in, if it depends upon supplying his extravagances. And then what a bother it is to be under the necessity of making it out to the tenants that Augustus is one of the most reasonable and amiable creatures living, while every body knows to the contrary. Some of these days, I suppose, I shall have to prove to the tenants that he is a slender young gentleman of twenty-two years of age!"

The building of the mansion went on, and Fitzgeorge was most happy in watching its progress. He could not help thinking how blest he should be when dilating his mighty self in

the saloons of the gorgeous building. He never inquired or cared about the expense, but regardless whence the money was to come from that should pay for it all, he kept continually issuing fresh orders, and making all manner of ridiculous blunders, directing work to be done that afterwards had to be undone at a very considerable expense; and not only was all the odium of the extravagance, but all the disgrace of the architectural blundering, was laid at the door of the poor steward or the architect. And after all this parade and expense, Fitzgeorge never occupied the house at all.

CHAPTER XI.

ATTEMPT AT DIVORCE.

THE career of Fitzgeorge had now proceeded a long, long way most unsatisfactorily. Hope after hope had expired, wish after wish had been ungratified. Almost all his days had been imbittered by some humiliation or perplexed by some cares. He who had commenced life in the full and confident expectation of having, through its whole course, nothing but unmingled pleasure and deep content, now found himself fretful, fat, peevish, and morose; looking on the world as on a painted courtesan who had lured him to destruction. But he had no other hope than in

the few years which remained to him, as a tenant of the living world; and was it likely, that these few remaining years should ever be able to make him amends for all the cares and mortifications of the past? Not at all. Had he, indeed, given himself a moments thought, he might have seen that no great promise lay before him; he had exhausted almost all the sources of enjoyment of a physical nature, and for moral or intellectual enjoyments he had neither taste nor capacity. He could form no new combinations of soup or punch, and he had comparatively little pleasure in the old and well-known flavours. He could drink, but was afraid of the consequences of drink, lest it should shorten his days; so that he enjoyed the pleasures of intoxication partially and imperfectly. His senses in general were failing him, and his actual interest in life had been abated, though he clung with all his power to its pomps and vanities and sensualities.

At length the old Lord Fitzgeorge departed

this life at an advanced age, leaving a title and an encumbered estate to Augustus. Better late than never, thought the younger, though now no longer younger Fitzgeorge. Straight there rose before the eye of Augustus, visions of pomp and glory, of new mansions and new furniture. This accession to his dignity brought a little more interest and impulse to his mind, and he had the sensation of a child who, when just dropping to sleep at the close of a day, is awakened to partake of a splendid supper. His prospects now for a moment seemed bright, and he felt as though he was going to have every thing his own way. But it was merely a gleam —a transient gleam—it was the emerging of the sun's brightness just before it sets in darkness; for presently came to him the intelligence that the Lady Louisa had claimed the title of Lady Fitzgeorge, and had sent intimation that it was her immediate intention to come over to England, and to demand the honours and immunities belonging to her rank.

The person who brought this sad intelligence to Fitzgeorge was an apothecary, and had been accustomed to sights of sorrow and sounds of grief; but he said afterwards, that he had never witnessed so sad a sight as that of Fitzgeorge when he communicated this intelligence to him. He first looked red with anger, and then looked pale with fear; then nearly fainted away. Fortunately a bottle of brandy, by the merest accident in the world, happened to be standing at his side; and the judicious apothecary considerately and kindly urged him to drink two or three glasses, by which he was happily prevented from absolutely swooning. When he had swallowed the brandy, and smacked his lips and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, for he was too much of a gentleman to wipe it with the palm of his hand, he lifted up his eyes to the ceiling, which was very elegantly painted, and said, "D—n it." He did not mean to damn the ceiling or the brandy, but the return of his wife.

The apothecary was so shocked at Fitzgeorge's profaneness, that he also took a glass of brandy out of mere fright, scarcely knowing what he did. When master and man were both primed, they sat down seriously to deliberate what was best to be done.

"Take another glass, doctor," said Fitzgeorge.

The doctor did so; and the Honourable Augustus, whom by the way we should now call Lord Fitzgeorge, did the same.

"How shall we proceed?" said Fitzgeorge.

"Positively I can't say," said the apothecary. "Have you got any witnesses? Can you make out any case against her?"

"Fifty," replied Fitzgeorge.

"One will do as well as fifty," replied the apothecary, "provided that one is a good one."

"For that matter," said Fitzgeorge, "I suppose one is as good as another. My worthy agents on the continent send me word that I could have as many witnesses as I pleased to

pay for, who would be kind enough to swear for me to any thing I chose to dictate."

"That is all very pleasant and promising," replied the apothecary; "but I do not half like that superabundant readiness in swearing. That was the case with the Simkins some years ago. They did more harm than good by attempting too much. You must endeavour to have your witnesses properly tutored, so that they may be able to bear cross-examination; many an honest witness breaks down under that, and scarcely any hired witnesses can stand it unless they have been exceedingly well prepared."

"But my correspondents tell me, that I may depend on the firmness and coherence of the witnesses, who are as properly and completely prepared as men can be; they have all rehearsed their parts, and have learned them so thoroughly by heart, that there is little fear of their forgetting them; and they are given to understand, that they are to be paid in proportion to the success of their testimony."

"I hope," said the apothecary, "that they will not attempt to swear too much. Perjury, you know, my Lord, is a very wicked thing, and the less we have of it the better. I would not use it too freely, were I in your case."

"My dear doctor," replied Fitzgeorge, "I will use no more of it than is absolutely necessary. It is not only wicked, but in the present case, it will be exceedingly expensive."

"Shall you proceed immediately?" asked the doctor.

"I have not yet had time to give that matter a thought," replied Fitzgeorge. After a little pause he added, "Suppose she should recriminate?"

"Can she afford to purchase witnesses?"

"She may have too many without purchasing."

"If it should come to that, you will find it a difficult matter to get a divorce; nay, an absolute impossibility."

"I would never put myself to the trouble and

expense of a prosecution, if I had no hopes of getting a divorce. Here is a difficulty. Every body must know, that I should be glad to have a divorce, and yet I must not seem too eager after it. What must I do?—To have her living in this country, and bearing the title of Lady Fitzgeorge, is more than I can possibly endure, even though I should never see her."

"Perhaps," said the apothecary, "you can bribe her to stay abroad."

"Or terrify her," said Fitzgeorge.

"Or both," said the apothecary. "Send a messenger over to the continent, to tell her, that if she will stay where she is, you will increase her allowance according to your own increased means; but that if she returns to this country you will immediately commence a suit against her, which will be certain to terminate in divorce, contempt, and poverty."

"And yet," said Fitzgeorge, "for we must keep our eye very much upon public opinion in this matter; if I bribe her to stay abroad, will

it not look as if I had some doubts of the success of my system of prosecution. Every body knows that I should be glad to get rid of her; and, therefore, if I make any offer by way of compromise, will it not look as if I feared that the other scheme should fail? It is all very well to promise, it is all very well to threaten, but threats and promises too are superfluous; they show weakness. Nobody much heeds the threats of those who make promises. The law, you know, only threatens, and that answers the purpose for the most part. Now, if my wife knows that I have power to put my threats in execution, she will consider it quite enough, if I suffer her to remain unmolested where she is. But, if I offer her a bribe to stay away, she will immediately infer, that I have no great confidence in the power of my threat. And if she regards not the threat, she will not regard the bribe. Mr. Apothecary, I feel myself puzzled."

"But if you neither bribe nor threaten, what will you do? She must come—nothing can prevent her."

"She must not come," replied Fitzgeorge; "I will move heaven and earth to prevent her."

"But if heaven and earth will not prevent her, what then?"

"Why, then I must go further,

"Flectere si nequeo superos Acheronta movebo."

"I know not how to advise you," said the apothecary.

"And if you did know," said Fitzgeorge, "I should not want your advice, for I should know how to advise myself. It is a case in which no one can advise to any good purpose. I have overshot my mark."

Fitzgeorge filled a glass with brandy and said, "Mr. Apothecary—your good health."

The apothecary did the same to the good health of Fitzgeorge, and departed; leaving his lordship alone to doze off the effect of his brandy, and to meditate on the threatened return of his wife.

Fitzgeorge muttered to himself and said, "Bah—this apothecary is a fool! He can give no advice. He has hardly wit enough to find his way back to his own shop. What must I do?—What must I do?—Here am I mustering my thoughts, and having no thoughts to muster. How pleasantly life would pass away, if I could always continue in this half-muzzy and muddled condition. Just now at this moment, I seem to care for nothing—no, not even for my wife—my wife?—Yes—yes—I must get rid of her, and then—stay—what was I thinking about? Oh—ay—my wife—well she says she will come—then, as sure as I live, I will prosecute her for matrimony—psha—I mean adultery—then I will have a divorce—and then I will marry again—let me see, whom shall I marry? Plenty of evidence—she knows that—she knows that my fellows have been buying up witnesses till there are scarcely any left for her to purchase, either for love or money. Let me see again—see—see?

I see double. I am glad my wife is not here—for if she was, I should see two. I must not promise and threaten too, said the apothecary—I believe the fellow was right; for if I promise as well as threaten, she will not mind my threats. Suppose, then, I merely threaten. Suppose I send to inform her that, if she persists in returning to England, I will accuse her of adultery, and that I have purchased two or three score of witnesses, ready to swear to any thing. But then suppose I fail in the proof.—Suppose I promise to double her allowance if she stays away. Then all the world will say, that I have endeavoured to get up a case against her and have not been able, and that now I am bribing her to stay away because I have nothing against her. Bother—I have been playing the fool for the last forty years, and now I must use my utmost skill to botch up the blunders that I have made. She must not come—I will threaten and promise, and promise and threaten. I know not which way to turn. I should like

to examine the witnesses myself, but not now, for the brandy has got into my head. What a small quantity of drink affects my head now! I remember the time that I could drink, I forget how much. I wish I had that time to come over again—and yet I was not happy even then—though rather happier than I am now."

Fitzgeorge then sank into an easy chair and slept, but he was disturbed by many dreams—frightful dreams. Annoyances seemed to accumulate one upon another, till all life and being grew wearisome and burdensome to him. He would fain forget, but he could not; he would fain look to the future with hope, but he could not; he would fain bear the present with patience, but he could not. He woke from his dreamy sleep, and endeavoured to shake off his sleepy dreams, but reality was worse than imagination.

"Life," said he to himself, "is a game which I have hitherto played badly, and now the game is nearly up, and I cannot recover it.

I began with a handful of trumps, and have thrown them all away; I was so confident of my luck, that I thought there was no need of skill. I have been miserably wrong. Can I ever rectify the past? Not till I can recal it. And what is the future to be? The dregs of the past. Oh, what a cruel mockery is the homage which surrounds me! How insulting the adulation of my flatterers! How misplaced the envy of of my inferiors! All envy is misplaced I think; for if any where there were appearances of an enviable condition, surely mine was one to invite envy; yet I know by bitter experience that no one has any just cause, or ever had, to envy me. Nor will I envy them. I will not add the bitterness of imagination to the mortifications of reality."

When the apothecary had got over the effects of the brandy, he returned to Fitzgeorge, accompanied by his lordship's steward, one Jenkin, or Jankyn, formerly a haberdasher at Liverpool.

"I have brought this gentleman with me," said the apothecary, "to take your lordship's orders as to what you would wish to have done in the present unhappy conjuncture of affairs, for we are both of us unanimously of opinion that if you do not wish her ladyship, that is to say, your wife to come back to England, the best thing you can do is to try all you can to prevent her return."

"You are a pair of conjurors," said his lordship, "and pray how am I to prevent it?"

"Why, my lord," replied Jenkin, rather flattered by the compliment which his lordship had paid him in calling him a conjuror, "I humbly beg leave to be of opinion that, under the present circumstances, the most eligible mode of proceeding will be to send a messenger to meet the lady, and to threaten, and to promise, and to beg, and to pray, and to implore that she may not be so ill advised as to return to England; for that, if she does, there will be

a prosecution commenced immediately against her."

"But suppose," said Fitzgeorge, "that she should not be afraid of a prosecution. That is what I am afraid of; and in that case she will come and defy us."

"In this predicament," replied the doctor, "you must adopt the plan that I recommended before, and promise as well as threaten."

"The plan that you recommended!" said Fitzgeorge; "I thought that I proposed it, and you objected to it."

"Quite the reverse," replied the apothecary.

"Ah, very likely," said Fitzgeorge, "I have been asleep since."

"It will be necessary," said Jenkin, "to determine quickly, for I understand that she has sent to England for her lawyer, one Birch, who is a sharpish kind of a fellow, and will not stick at trifles; he will be glad to bring her home to England, for if there is to be any prosecution he will have a job."

Fitzgeorge did not like this Birch, and the mention of his name put him quite in a passion —impatiently then he exclaimed, "Plague take you both, go and send messengers or letters immediately, promise, threaten, lie, swear, do any thing you will, only keep the woman out of England."

So saying, he pushed Jenkin and the apothecary out of the room, and they went and did as they were commanded.

In the mean time Birch the lawyer hastened over to meet the Lady Louisa, according to her instructions; and as he went along he said to himself, "Fitzgeorge now deserves all he suffers, for his own incomparable folly. He threatens his wife with a prosecution by means of suborned witnesses, and lets all the world know of his threat, and then he sends messengers to her to say that he will withhold the prosecution, if she will remain on the continent, and not claim the title of Lady Fitzgeorge. Should she accede to these terms, she will ac-

knowledge the justice of the accusation. Knowing the persecution to which she would be exposed in England, it was folly in her to attempt to return, but it would now be madness to give up the intention. By his own most exquisitely absurd conduct, Fitzgeorge has brought upon himself a trouble which will last him for the rest of his life. His wife was coming to England, he dreaded her coming, and he now puts forth a manifesto that renders it impossible for her not to come."

When Mr. Birch was introduced into the presence of Lady Louisa, he found her not only calm, but even cheerful, and thoroughly self-possessed.

"I have not sent for you, Mr. Birch," said her ladyship, "for the purpose of asking advice, for I have but one line of conduct to pursue. My husband, after having persecuted me in England till he has driven me to the continent, has now followed me with his persecution and threats on the continent, till he compels me to

return. I came here to avoid insult, I must go back again to refute calumny. Is not my situation one of complete and unparalleled hardship? Your profession, Mr. Birch, has led you to an acquaintance with many cases of oppression and cruelty, but with none, I apprehend, equal to this of mine. I would willingly have lived in seclusion and retirement, but I could not. I found that my steps were watched, that daily and hourly I was waylaid; that an embassy had been absolutely sent from England purposely to get up a charge against me. Now, sir, this charge was every where understood to be got up against me for the purpose of preventing my return to England, in case of that event which has made a change in my husband's rank and titles. When that event occurred, I should have only corroborated the suspicions that were thrown out against me, had I hesitated to return immediately, or to announce my intention of returning. It is an affair in which I can have no choice."

Mr. Birch acknowledged the justice of her ladyship's remarks, and the hardships that surrounded her. To the messengers who were sent from Fitzgeorge, and to the message which they brought, an immediate answer was returned, saying that she who feared not justice would not stoop to ask for mercy. To her legal adviser she said, "I am now placed in a situation in which I scarcely know how to act for the best, and in which I am no more capable of receiving, than any one is competent to give me advice. Say that I look meekly and tearful, bowed down in spirit, and broken in heart; will not my enemies, that is my husband's sycophants, for none have cause of hostility against me, save such as find it convenient to play the sycophant to him, will not these people affirm that my bended spirit is a token of conscious guilt. And again, if I bear myself with a gay and cheerful spirit, and am unabashed before my persecutors and accusers, then they will reprove me for my boldness and charge me with

being insensible to shame. But with whom should shame rest? With conspirators or their victim. I have nothing to be ashamed of, but my husband."

Speedily the accused and calumniated wife returned to England, greatly to the annoyance of her husband, who was afraid to prosecute, and yet afraid to abstain from prosecution. He sent for his faithful slab, Jenkin, and said to him, "Now this troublesome woman is come, and we must do our best to get rid of her. That impudent fellow, Birch, will defend her through thick and thin, but I hope and trust that we shall be too many for him. I have all the papers and letters in my possession, and you shall have them to look over with some of your friends, and you must give me your opinion as to the mode of proceeding. The beauty of the matter is, that we have every thing in our own hands; for my wife does not know who are the witnesses against her, nor what are the

charges. We have even bought over some of her own servants."

"Why, if that be the case," said Jenkin, with great simplicity of manner, "you will have direct evidence: for if all be true that has been said, it is impossible but that her own servants must know the facts, and, of course, that will be better than circumstantial evidence."

"If all be true?—you blockhead!" said Fitzgeorge, angrily, "what do you mean by presuming to doubt? Sirrah, will you dare to believe that my wife is innocent, if I choose to say that she is guilty?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Jenkin, almost frightened out of his wits by the terrible manner in which Fitzgeorge spoke to him; "Certainly not, my lord, I should be very sorry to doubt or deny any thing that your lordship might be pleased to affirm."

"You had better not, indeed," said Fitzgeorge, "for it would be as much as your place is worth."

Mr. Jenkin immediately departed, making ten thousand bows, and begging ten thousand pardons; and he carried the papers to his friend, the apothecary, and said, "Upon my word, Mr. Squirt, I have got into a pretty scrape with this precious master of mine. Here are the letters and papers all about my lady's conduct or misconduct, when she was abroad, and master says that he insists upon it that I shall find evidence of her guilt in them, and that if I don't it is quite as much as my place is worth. I wish you would give me your help."

"With all my heart," said the apothecary.

So they two sat down, and went to reading the letters and conning over the documents, on which they were employed quite till midnight; for it was an object with them both, if possible, to find unquestionable evidences of guilt. When they had fairly finished their task, Jenkin looked very knowingly at the apothecary, and said, "Well, Squirt, what do you think of all this?"

"Think!" echoed the apothecary, "why I think that Lord Fitzgeorge ought to be ashamed to put such a parcel of trash into the hands of a respectable man. It is enough to make one blush to read it!"

"And what does it prove, after all?" said Mr. Jenkin.

"At present," said the apothecary, "it proves nothing; but I am afraid it will prove soon a means of great trouble to you, or your master, or both. For you see, notwithstanding the evidence of one or two of her own domestic servants, there is nothing of positive proof, all is merely circumstantial. Then when you have to come to examine the witnesses in open court, and to cross-examine them, and when that sharp-eyed, and sharp-witted fellow, lawyer Birch interrogates them and comments upon the evidence there will be nothing left of the matter for crimination. I think he had better give it up for a bad job; and if I were in your place, Mr. Jenkin, I would tell him so, too."

"Ay, and if you were in my place, Mr. Squirt," responded Jenkin, and were to tell my Lord Fitzgeorge any thing of the kind, you would not be in my place long;—he must have his own way, and, what is more, he will too. He is just like his father for that; nothing can put him out of his way, when he has once taken a thing into his head."

"Well, then, give up your place at once."

"Give up my place, indeed! Yes, yes, that is very easily said; but saying and doing are two different things. Such places are not to be easily met with now-a-days."

The next morning Mr. Jenkin and the apothecary waited upon Lord Fitzgeorge, and stated that they had looked over the papers, and thought that there was not enough to criminate her ladyship, so as to answer any good purpose; that is, not so as to obtain a divorce.

His lordship then flew into a violent passion, and said that they were a couple of fools, and could not tell black from white, nor right from wrong.

"Well, but, my lord," said Jenkin, very respectfully, "will you have the kindness to hear me?"

"I have heard you," replied Fitzgeorge, more than I like already. I will hear no more unless it is that I have some chance of getting rid of my wife."

"My lord," replied Jenkin, "all that I say is for your good. I am sure your lordship would be exceedingly sorry indeed, to bring the matter before a court, and not be able to establish the charge, nor to get a verdict."

Thereupon Fitzgeorge, who had before been violently angry, and almost furious, changed his tone, and laughed outright, saying, "Not able to get a verdict! Why, Mr. Jenkin, you are absolutely a greater noodle than I took you to be. In the court where this must be tried, you know, I can get any verdict I please! most of the jury are my dependants, and if I chose to prosecute you there for witchcraft, they would bring you in guilty, though they all know that you are no conjuror."

Mr. Jenkin and the apothecary laughed;—for when great men are witty, little men should always laugh.

"That certainly is a great point gained, as you say, my lord, that making sure of the jury. Only you know Mr. Jenkin and myself looked over the evidence, principally with a view to the impression it might produce on a common honest jury."

"Come," said Fitzgeorge, rather jocularly again, "let me hear no reflections on the honesty of my friends. If I cannot say much for their honesty, they are very valuable for their fidelity—they are as faithful as so many spaniels. They would give any verdict I chose to ask them, and would contradict it the next minute, if I requested it; but as it is necessary for them to have some little reputation with the public, I should not like to run them too hard."

"All that is very true, my lord, as your lordship says," replied Mr. Jenkin; "and before a jury that so well understands your lord-

ship's wishes, and that is so considerate of your lordship's feelings, it is possible that such evidence may do. It is just enough to make it possible that her ladyship is guilty,. and it may vindicate the verdict to the world."

"That," replied Fitzgeorge, "is all I want."

On this the trial was instituted—through the filth and perjury of which, we hope our readers have no wish or inclination to be dragged. One anecdote, however, and one only, as characteristic of the nature of the evidence, is worthy of record. On the bench with the judge sat several magistrates, who occasionally asked the witnesses questions—some with a view of helping, others with a view of opposing, Fitzgeorge. There was present also among the spectators of the trial on the bench, a smart young gentleman, who was related to one of the magistrates. When one of the witnesses had been cross-examined by Mr. Birch, and had in his cross-examination shuffled and prevaricated most abominably, this young gentleman slipped be-

hind the judge, and pulling him by the gown said in a whisper, "I should like to ask that witness one question." The judge smiled, and said, "What question, my boy? Shall I ask it?"—"Do, sir, if you please," said the lad; "ask him how he feels after telling so many lies."—"Go along, you young rogue," said the judge.

This judge summed up most unfavourably against the accused, and obtained from the pliable jury a verdict for Fitzgeorge. But such was the indignation expressed in the court among the spectators of the trial, that the judge did not dare to record the verdict, and Louisa triumphed.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

CONCLUSION OF THE SCENE.

Was it a drawn battle between Fitzgeorge and his wife? Or which had conquered? If the victory was on the side of Fitzgeorge, it had cost an immense treasure in money, and a most marvellously great mass of perjury, or of that kind of swearing which looks vastly like it. We have had too great a regard for the delicacy of our readers to lead them through the abomination, but by the conclusion to which it has come, they may form some idea of the nature and credibility of the evidence, seeing that those of the jury who gave a verdict of guilty were

such as Fitzgeorge himself could calculate upon, and who were ready to give a verdict of guilty against Mr. Jenkin himself for the crime of witchcraft, if Fitzgeorge had been disposed to accuse him of it, even though they all knew that he was no conjuror.

If, on the other hand, the victory was on the side of the persecuted wife, it was a victory of moral sentiment against wealth, power and influence. The accused, as we have already stated, knew not the charges that were brought against her, nor the witnesses that were to be brought forward to substantiate the charges. Therefore it was not in her power to give to her counsel such instructions as might enable them to meet and rebut the evidence. The reason, indeed, why the names of the intended witnesses were not given, was exquisitely sound and good, because they were of such character that their whole testimony would not be worth a straw, if they could have been properly exhibited to the jury.

On which ever side the victory was, it is certain that Fitzgeorge had no real pleasure or satisfaction in the close of the conflict. And his wife, even though he felt it to be out of his power to prosecute her any more, it was not out of his power, nor out of his inclination, to persecute her still, and that most unrelentingly. Seeing that no sentence of divorce could be decently passed with a verdict acquired by such means, and effected by such tools, it remained to be determined whether she should receive or not the respect and privileges due to her rank as Lady Fitzgeorge. In claiming these, or abstaining from the claim, was a great and insurmountable difficulty. If she should claim them, she knew so well the temper of her husband as to be well aware that the claim could not be allowed, so far as he had it in his power to withhold it. And should she relinquish her claims, she knew that the censorious ones who were, by the various motives of sycophancy to her husband, or general malignity of spirit, her

enemies and calumniators, would attribute her abstinence to a consciousness of guilt. Whatever sacrifices, therefore, it might cost, her ladyship now resolved to put in her claim for all the honours and immunities of her rank; and as she was not proceeded against as guilty, she demanded to be treated as innocent.

As she foresaw, so it came to pass. Fresh indignities were heaped upon her, and the veriest of the rabble were countenanced in heaping up calumny against her. If ever a time should arrive in the lapse of ages, and in the revolutions of human affairs, in which men shall think calmly and dispassionately, and think for themselves, and not be any longer led to think in groups, or take the echo of another's word to be the result of their own thoughts, they will marvel much at the facility with which people of the present day are led by fashion, and are taught to think by proxy. Fitzgeorge had from his very early youth aspired, and that most successfully, to be a leader of fashion. While his father

was living there were, in some measure, two fashionable parties—the one with the father and the other with the son. The fashionable party which belonged and adhered to the father, consisted principally of those who facetiously called themselves the wise and good; this party, by the way, seems going out of fashion now, for it seems that their wisdom is not good for much. But the fashionable party that adhered to the son, consisted of that perfumed and tailor-built tribe called Dandies; animals that require as much time to dress themselves as a tailor does to make them a suit of clothes; creatures whose minds are incapable of any thing above millinery, who have no eyes or thoughts for any thing but life's outside—puppies whose insolence and insignificance is so nearly matched, that nobody can say which is the greatest. But when the old Lord Fitzgeorge was no longer in active and public life, and especially after the death of his lordship, the two parties united in sycophantic adherence to his successor; these,

therefore, by virtue of their wisdom and goodness, and dandyism, formed a numerous and malignant band against the discarded and calumniated wife of Fitzgeorge. Such of them as had wit enough for the purpose, were pleased to exercise their wit and buffoonery against the injured lady; and these parasites, who remorselessly and falsely vituperated her whom Fitzgeorge had from caprice rejected—for he had rejected before he had accused her, or procured her accusation;—these soulless wits were ready to lift their pens and voices in praise of any, of whatever character, or want of character, Fitzgeorge would honour with his notice. They could calumniate a discarded wife, and they could do honour to a favoured ———. All this was from the mere power of fashion—from the dread which vulgar dolts had to be thought vulgar. They who affected to be horror-struck at the least word of disrespect breathed against persons in high life, and bearing titles which mean nothing, could calumniate a relative of Fitzgeorge, be-

cause they thought such calumny would be agreeable to him.

Against mockery, insult, cruelty, treachery, brutality, Lady Louisa had to struggle; but not long could the struggle last. Life never had much to promise her, and she looked to its close with hope and composure;—under the pressure of her sorrows and persecutions, she sunk into the grave.

Fitzgeorge was now at liberty. Was he happy? Far from it. The pleasures which he had promised himself from the commencement of life and from the first formation of his hopes, were pleasures which required for their enjoyment youth, health, vigour, and alacrity. These now no longer remained to him. Painful as might be the thought, it was not in the power of all his flatterers to conceal from him the sad truth that he was no longer young. He had been so anxious for the enjoyments of life, and so fearful of age interfering with them, that he had watched the departure of every year with

studious care, grieving as the day came round that another year was gone. Cicero's Treatise on Old Age, was not able any more to console him under the pressure of age, than it had been to hold him up against the apprehension of it. Some men are miserable, thinking to themselves that they want nothing but money—but they are more miserable who want every thing but money. In this condition was Fitzgeorge. The duns of his early days were not about him, the narrowness of means which had troubled him all through life did not trouble him now. He had opportunity and power to please, and to indulge himself in architectural freaks and extravagances; he could command the most sumptuous furniture and the rarest decorations, and he could have some pleasure in gazing on them. He could command the talents of artists of every description, and they could obey the suggestions of his fancy. But they could not do every thing. The skilful limner could draw a flattering likeness of his tottering frame,

feeble beneath other pressure than that of years; but no skill of any artist could improve the original. Drugs, discipline, and diet might be prescribed and administered, and they might do something for the imagination, but they could not recal departed time or decayed strength. Youth comes not at the call of pills, and the strength that has been wasted in riot and dissipation, is not to be restored by potions and drugs. The leaves that fall from the tree must perish in the dust on which they fall, no hand can replace them to flourish on the tree again in greenness and vigour. Money, therefore, could not purchase for Fitzgeorge the health and youth which had departed from him.

Nor could money buy him friends. Adulators and sycophants, it could and did purchase; he was never at a loss for flatterers, but he had sense enough to know that they were flatterers. He felt that the sincerity of pure respect, the heartiness of generous friendship, the cordiality of sympathetic affection were not his and never

could be his. He felt no lack of homage or attention—attention most respectful, indeed, in its outward form, but it was all form and all external. If the footstep of the attendants fell lightly on the carpeted floors, if the officiousness of the valet anticipated every wish and want—if all the looks that surrounded him were modelled into the gracefulness of awful reverence, he knew that all this was purchased, that there was no other consideration in the light step and the officious attentions and the reverential looks, than the consideration of a good place and of easy services well paid.

Fitzgeorge had never been indifferent to the pleasures of the table, and now he had the means of that luxury in as much abundance as ever and more than ever, but the wines had lost their flavour and the condiments their relish—there was still a taste—but no *gusto*, no hearty relish—the general edge of appetite was dull—the discrimination of the palate was grown obtuse and inactive, the luxuries of the table

had little left of them but the name. The same error was cleaving to him in his latter days as had been his bane in the season of youth; that is, he expected to enjoy the pleasures of rest without undergoing the toils of business. He left the management of all things to his steward, and as an excuse, he pleaded the fatigue of attending to business. The fact is, that he was fatigued with rest, wearied with indolence—if he had undergone more fatigue, he would have suffered less fatigue. To rest from labour is possible, but to rest from rest is impossible. He whose business is work, may have rest and leisure, and relaxation; but when relaxation becomes a toil, there can be no relaxation from that toil.

Fitzgeorge was now in that state of mind or body, or both, which by means of the happy uncertainty of our language, may be expressed in the parodox of saying that he had lost his appetite for pleasure, but not his desire. His relish was gone. The vigour of his faculties

was abated or attenuated to a mere nothing, or his fastidiousness was so great that nothing could please him. And now he saw, that instead of not having had pleasure enough in life, he had had too much; he had pampered the body, and had neglected the mind; he had been endeavouring to enjoy the life of the body, and had neglected the life of the mind, the soul, the intellect.

"I am come now," said he to himself, in the last soliloquy that we shall record, "to that period of life which, in spite of all my reluctance, I must call old age. I am now at a point from which I may look back, and what do I see in the retrospect? I see gorgeous festivals—I remember, but faintly, their noise and clamour, and pride and emptiness. I see much that was anticipated with delight, but which was very little enjoyed. I have been all my life long looking forward to to-morrow, and now I have nothing to do but to look back to yesterday. Surely I have been disappointed in life, and

perhaps every body is. It is some little consolation to think it possible that others may have made as great mistakes as I have made myself. I have certainly made one discovery, and that a valuable one, but not to myself. I have discovered that wealth and rank, and high esteem, are not able to make us happy in spite of ourselves. For wealth may become by a careless extravagance the means of a poverty more galling than that which is felt by the ragged wanderer to whom a dry crust is a luxury, and a heap of straw is a bed of down;—and rank may be degraded by folly, and high esteem may be lost in the reckless attention to mere sensual pursuits. I have had friends—some, that in my younger days would, I now believe, have really served and assisted me. How much more I value them now than I did then. I am now rid of my wife! Oh, with what eagerness of wish and desire almost amounting to a prayer, have I looked forward to that bliss of total, effectual, separation. That is now accom

plished. And am I now happier? Am I so much happier as I anticipated that I should be? No—no. What can be the meaning of that word happiness which men so commonly and so fluently use? Is it not the fulfilment of their wishes and hopes? And have not all mine been fulfilled? When I was in my minority I wished to come of age—I have had that wish. When I was embarrassed and surrounded with duns, I wished to get rid of my embarrassments and to be relieved from the annoyance of duns—I have had that wish. When I was married, I wished to get rid of my wife—I have had that wish. When I was an heir, I wished to come into full possession—I have had that wish. What have I more to wish than to have life over again—and what would that be but to have all my wishes over again?"

So Fitzgeorge at length, though no Solomon, came to the same conclusion that Solomon did —"Vanity of vanities—all is vanity."

THE END.

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